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# Dedication

TO MY WIFE, VEDANAYAKI.

You grieve when I grieve, rejoice when I rejoice,
You are glad when I am praised, and sad when blamed ;
When I have keen anguish of heart, though unvoiced,
Lo, I've found you grieving for the pang unnamed !
When I am angry, you speak sweet words soothing,
You know to do the things to the times suiting ;
You are to me a wife, a friend, a servant,
And a minister great and all-observant.

A. S. P. AYYAR.

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# PREFACE

On the suggestion of a famous English dramatist, and other friends in the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom, that I should translate into English the newly-discovered Plays of Bhasa for the benefit of the English-speaking people, with an introduction, and that I should begin with the historical Play *Pratijna Yaugandharayana* and its romantic sequel *Svapna-vasavadatta*, I undertook this translation, translating prose into prose and verse into verse. I am immensely grateful for the warmth with which it was received in India and abroad, by the public and the press, and am particularly gratified at the popularity which it enjoys in the London School of Oriental Studies where I have spent some delightful hours during my sojourn in England.

The first edition was sold out some years ago, and there has been an insistent demand for a second edition from friends in India and abroad, and especially from the rising dramatists of the Indian Republic in the fourteen languages of the Union (into many of which it has been translated) and in English, which is equally dear to all Indians and is undoubtedly the fifteenth (and probably the most esteemed) language of India. May the idealism and Realism of the Father of the Indian Drama serve as a model and inspiration to them all!

"Gita", Madras - 31
Thai Poosam.
25-1-1959

**A. S. P. Ayyar.**

# INTRODUCTION

## Bhasa

Bhasa is the Father of the Indian drama. He was a famous dramatist who lived and wrote his plays long before Kalidasa. Kalidasa, in his *Malavikagnimitra*, refers to him as an old and established dramatist and with a feeling of diffidence regarding his own play when compared with those of Bhasa. Bhasa lived in the days of Chandragupta Maurya, in the second half of the 4th Century B. C., and was an elder contemporary of Kautilya or Chanakya, the famous prime minister of Chandragupta He was the first regular dramatist in India, like Aeschylus, in Greece, and wrote 23 to 30 plays as against 90 by Aeschylus, 100 by Sophocles, and 92 by Euripides, at a time when the convention had not become established in Sanskrit that no dramatist should write more than three plays. His plays had a vast range and an infinite variety of characters and had vivid description of natural phenomona, and were marked by profound psychological insight, striking figures of speech, vignettess from life, and brilliant epigrams and had all the *navarasas*, viz. humour and sarcasm, heroism surprise, anger, pity, terror, serenity, devotion, and love, parental and conjugal. He was noted among the ancients for his humour ; anthologists describe him as Bhasa, the Humourist. (H*aso Bhasa*): These plays had disappeared for many centuries past, like many other great Sanskrit works, including the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya, and 13 of them were luckily discovered by Mahamahopadhyaya Ganapati Sastri, by sheer accident, in 1909, and were pub-

lished by him. Rather curiously, unknown to Ganapati Sastri a copyist called Sampatkumara Chakravarthi of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, had on 30-1-1906, three years before the great find of Ganapati Sastri copied for the library, in Devanagiri script, the plays *Svapnavasavadatta* and *Pratijna Yaugandharayana* from a Malayalam manuscript, without knowing what famous plays he was copying, something like a villager walking over a diamond mine. The plays had disappeared due to several reasons, the principal of which were the systematic suppression of them by the Muhammadan rulers who foresaw danger to their rule in these plays which preach burning patriotism and hatred of foreign rule and a passionate love for Hindu culture and for the Vedic gods and goddesses; the ancient Sanskrit and prakrit languages, in which the plays were written, had become comparatively unfamiliar to the masses acquainted only with the regional languages; and the replacement of the Vedic gods and goddesses, and the old ideals, in Hinduism by the Puranic gods and goddesses, and the puranic ideals.

## Are the 13 Trivandrum Plays [1]Bhasa's ?

*Fierce controversy*—Ever since the discovery of the Trivandrum plays, there has been a fierce controversy as to whether they are the genuine plays of Bhasa, a few, like Dr. Pusalker,[2] and Dr. Keith[3] giving their votes in favour of their genuineness, many, like Messrs. Pisharot,

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1. The 13 Plays are :—Pratijna Yaugandharayana ; Svapnavasavadatta ; Pancharatra ; Charudatta ; Avimaraka ; Balacharita ; Madhyamavyayoga ; Karnabhara ; Urubhanga ; Dutavakya ; Pratimanataka ; Abhishekanataka ; and Dutaghatotkacha.

2. See his excellent book Bhasa : A study'

3. " The Sanskrit Drama ", Oxford University Press.

Raja, Devadhar, and even Winternitz, casting their votes against their genuineness, and some, like Dr. Sukthanker, holding a few plays, like *Pratijna* and *Svapna* alone, to be genuine, and deferring judgment regarding the rest. I have no doubt whatever that all the thirteen plays are Bhasa's. My reasons are given below.

Kalidasa lived in the Court of Vikramaditya, and some scholars put his date as the first century B. C., seeing that the *Vikrama Era* began in 57 B.C. with Vikramaditya of Ujjain, and that Kalidasa wrote about Agnimitra Sunga, who lived in the second century B. C. But the better opinion is that he lived in the Court of Chandragupta Vikramaditya (Chandragupta II) who ruled from 375 to 414 A.D. That his date cannot be later than this is clear from the fact that he had become renowned, and almost proverbially renowned, as the first among the poets and dramatists (*Kavikula Guru*) by the time of Bana, who undoubtedly lived in the Court of Emperor Harsha early in the seventh century A.D., and from the fact that his style was obviously imitated in the Vatsabhatti inscription of 472—73, and as his *Kumarasambhava* has probably a hidden reference to the birth of Kumara Gupta, the son of Chandragupta Vikramaditya, who ruled from 414—455. The location of the Huns in his *Raghuvamsa* just outside India also shows that he must have written it late in the fourth century A.D. As he refers to Bhasa as an old and renowned dramatist, and puts him before Saumillaka and Kaviputra or Ramillaka, the brother of Saumillaka it is obvious that he must have preceded them. Saumillaka wrote the

*Sudraka Katha*, and *Kaviputra* wrote *Maniprabha*, and both these brothers are held by competent scholars to have lived in the first century A. D.

*Asvaghosha's Borrowing.*—Asvaghosha, the famous poet and dramatist at Kanishka's court, has, in his *Buddha Charita*, clearly imitated Verse 18[1] in Act I of *Yaugandharayana's Vows*. So, Bhasa was far earlier than Asvaghosha who almost certainly lived not later than the first century, A.D. The Buddhists took to Sanskrit late. So Asvaghosha must have been the borrower.

*Kautilya's Quotation*:—Kautilya, who almost certainly wrote his *Arthasastra* in the fourth century B.C., quotes in it a verse[2] exactly like Verse 2 of Act IV of *Yougandharayana's Vows*. So, Bhasa was evidently a senior contemporary of Kautilya, something like Tagore being a senior contemporary of Gandhi, and belonged to the fourth century B. C., and lived in the days of Chandragupta Maurya.

*Clearly of the Mauryan Age;*—This is also clear from the description of *Rajasimha* in the Bharatavakya in *Svapnavasavadatta* as ruler of the country between the

1 Fire is got ev'n from wood by constant churning.
Water is got from earth by patient digging:
Nothing's impossible for men of daring
Who go the proper way, ever succeeding!

2 He who eats his master's food and will not fight,
Let that wretch ne'r get sight of holy water
With its coat of sacred *darbha* grass, or sight
Of Heaven, but go straigt to Hell, the rotter.
Arthasastra, Book X. Ch 3. Para 368.

imalayas and the Vindhyas and from sea to sea. It is an curate account of Chandragupta's dominions in the rly years of his rule, and is the *Chakravarti Kshetra* entioned in the *Arthasastra.* By the time of Bindusara e dominions had been extended up to Brahmagiri in ysore and Kancheepuram in Madras State, and these ontiers remained intact during the days of Asoka, and alinga also was re-subjugated and annexed. So, Bhasa ust have lived in the days of Chandragupta Maurya, i.e., the second half of the fourth century B.C. oth Bhasa and Kautilya show an utter abhorrence of reign rule, Kautilya says in Chapter II, of Book 8 *Arthasastra.* "On Vices and Calamities": "A foreign ler, who seizes the country from its king, thinks that the untry is not his own, impoverishes it and carries off its ealth or treats it as a commercial article. When the untry begins to hate the foreign rule, he retires abandoning e country." (What an exquisite description of the retreat Alexander from India!). Bhasa, in the *Bharatavakya* *Avimaraka, Abhishekanataka* and *Pratijna-augandharayana* has said; "May the King be free om trouble! May the foreign army be defeated, and ay our *Rajasimha* (lion-like king) rule this entire arth!", obviously referring to the invasion by eleukos Nikator. This, coupled with the similarity in ountries, cities, conditions and ways of life described the *Arthasastra* and Bhasa's plays viz., nall kingdoms which existed before the rise of the lauryan Empire but after the Buddha and Mahavira, he appearance of Buddhist and Jain monks in Bhasa's

plays shows this) and the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (most of the plots of Bhasa's plays being taken from these two books) and *Brihatkatha* of Gunadhya written in the *paisachi* language, (the plot of Avimaraka is taken from it) makes it clear to me that Bhasa lived late in the fourth century B.C., like Kautilya, his junior contemporary, who quoted a verse from him in his *Arthasastra*. Though Dr. Pusalker considers Bhasa to have lived in the reign of Mahapadma Nanda, the first historical ruler who brought under his rule practically the whole of North India, I am of opinion that Bhasa wrote his plays in the reign of Chandragupta Maurya and lived after the death of Mahapadma Nanda and during the reign of the tyrannical Navanandas, headed by Dhana Nanda.

Bhasa was a devout Vaishnavite Brahmin, as we shall see later, and a follower of the Vedas, Sastras, the Epics and Puranas. The Nandas were undoubtedly not liked by the Brahmins, probably because they did not respect them and even persecuted them. That is why Chanakya or Kautilya or Vishnugupta uprooted them, and has written at the end of his *Arthasastra*: "This *Sastra* has been made by him, who, from intolerance of misrule, quickly rescued the scriptures and the science of weapons and the earth which had passed to the Nanda king." The reference of Bhasa in *Pratijna Yaugandharayana*, in Act III, to Rahu trying to swallow the moon most probably refers to the attempt of Rakshasa, Dhanananda's premier, to defeat and swallow up Chandragupta. (See *Mudrarakshasa* and my book *Chanakya* and *Chandragupta* for this episode). Kamandaka refers to Chandra-

gupta as the moon among men, and Rahu is associated by Hindus with *Mlechhas*, *Rakshasas* and others. Further, Chandragupta and the other Maurya kings in general apparently called themselves *Rajasimhas*. This can be seen from the fact that Asoka adopted three lions (now taken over by the Republic of India as its symbol) as his symbol in Sarnath Pillar. It may even be that the three lions represent Chandragupta, Bindusara Amitraghata and Asoka himself, though indirectly they symbolise also the *Sakya simha* or the Buddha. Yaugandharayana is evidently intended to represent his own contemporary Chanakya and his vow to indicate the famous vow of Chanakya to extirpate the Nandas and to make Chandragupta king. The *Sramanaka* in *Yaugandharayana's Vows* may represent *Jeevasiddhi* who helped Chanakya in capturing Pataliputra. Chandragupta's marrying Durdhara, a princess of the Nanda family and, of course, from Magadha, may be symbolically indicated by Udayana's marrying Padmavati, a princess of Magadha, for similar political reasons. The description of Yaugandharayana as a cloud with the moon showing through applies aptly to Chanakya, a dark southerner, and to Chandragupta. The elephant *Nalagiri* may have a covert reference to Poros's famous elephant. The *Bharatavakya* in *Abhisheka* and *Pratijna Yaugandharayana*, containing prayers for the rout of the foreign armies may very well refer to the invading armies of Seleukos Nikator. The prayer for the protection of the cows in many of the *Bharatavakyas* also shows the hold that the *Vrishala* civilisation of the Mauryas had on Bhasa.

*Bana's Tribute.*—Bana (7th century A.D.) refers to Bhasa in his *Harshacharita* as follows: "Bhasa gained as much fame, by his plays, beginning with benedictory verses spoken by the stage-directors and containing numerous and varying characters and stirring episodes, as he would have done by the erection of *temples* constructed by famous architects with several stories and banners." This shows that Bhasa wrote many plays with several acts (stories) and banners (interludes and preludes), that these plays began with verses spoken by Stage-Directors, and were full of a holy and religious atmosphere (like the *Abhisheka*, *Pratima*, *Balacharita*, *Dutavakya*, etc.,) as the comparison is to *temples*, and not to *palaces* or *music-halls*, that they were famous even in Bana's days, and that they had numerous characters in each drama. Evidently, Bhasa was the first dramatist in India, like Aeschylus in Greece, to write and produce regular full-fledged dramas with many and varied characters. The drama began in India, as in Greece, with a religious dance and recitation by one character. It was evolved into real drama by introducing various characters. Bhasa became celebrated because of this, as also because of his exquisite scenes, like the wooden elephant in *Pratijna Yaugandharayana*, the statue scene in *Pratima Nataka*, the dream scene in *Svapnavasavadatta*, and the suicide scene in *Avimaraka*, and his many sallies of humour and his epigrams (*subhashitas*).

*Another early Tribute.*—In *Avanti Sundari Katha* of the 7th or 8th century A.D., there is the following passage:—"Bhasa is living through his dramas which

constitute, as it were, his body, which has assumed so many different forms in his plays". This clearly shows that Bhasa wrote a number of plays, and the reference will fit in with the thirteen plays discovered so far. In fact, there may be an allusion in that passage to the fine scene in *Dutavakya*, where the body of Vasudeva assumed various forms, and Vasudeva lived in all those different forms, thereby showing that *Dutavakya* was known to be a play of Bhasa.

*Contest with Vyasa*—In a commentary on the *Prithvirajavijaya* of Jayanaka, Bhasa and the great sage Veda Vyasa, of *Mahabharata* fame, are said to have disputed as to who was the better writer. Each threw one chosen work into the fire, and Bhasa's *Vishnu Dharma* is said to have come out of it unscathed, while Vyasa's book was burnt. Unfortunately, men have not been able to preserve what the elements spared, and Bhasa's *Vishnu Dharma* is not discovered yet, though, I am sure, it will be one day, like the *Arthasastra*, and, indeed, all the thirteen plays so far discovered. The very tradition of Bhasa's contest with Vyasa shows his hoary antiquity and indicates a date between those of the Ramayana and Mahabharata (from which he took at least nine of his plots) and the first century A. D. when Saumillaka and Kaviputra lived.

*Critics Test by Fire.*—Rajasekhara (900 A. D.) from Maharashtra, says, in his *Suktimuktavali* "When critics subjected Bhasa's *cycle of plays* to the test of fire, the fire did not burn the *Svapna.*" This also shows that

Bhasa wrote a number of plays, and that *Svapnavasavadatta* was considered to be the best among them, *Svapnavasavadatta* is certainly the best among the thirteen plays discovered so far.[1]

*Further references:* Vamana (8th century A. D) has quoted verses which can be traced to *Svapnavasavadatta* and *Charudatta* of Bhasa, in his *Kavyalankarasutravritti*. As he knew the *Mricchakatika* well, it shows the Bhasa's Charudatta was a different and earlier play copied to a large extent in the *Mricchakatika.*

*Bhamaha's reference to Pratijna Yaugandharayana:* Bhamaha (8th century) attacks, as contrary to common-sense, Udayanas's mistaking the artificial elephant for a real one and Mahasena's troops, many of whom Udayana had killed, leaving Udayana unkilled, despite some of the slain being their brothers, sons, fathers, uncles, etc. He appears to have been a pedantic critic, asking too much from human nature, and believing implicitly in the supposed logical workings of the human mind. He would have rejected the story of the Wooden Horse of Troy, and would have been surprised at Napoleon's not being killed outright by the British when he took refuge in the *Belleraphone* after killing so many relatives of the English soldiers. But there is no doubt that his criticism was levelled against Act I of *Yaugandharayana's*

1 Such legendary tests are legion in India. Thus, Tiruvalluvar's *Kural* survived a water test. Because of Bhasa's *Vishnu Dharma* and *Svapnavasavadatta* surviving the fire test, the god of Fire, Agni, was said to be his friend, by Vakpatiraja (8th century) in his *Gaudavaho*.

*Vows* by Bhasa. A clumsy wooden elephant with a covering of leather would not have deceived any one, but a cleverly made elephant, something like a model in Madame Tassaud's, can easily deceive even experts, especially when masked by a herd of real elephants, like a clever counterfeit note in the midst of several genuine notes. So too, when Mahasena wanted Udayana to be captured alive in order to render obeisance to him, there is nothing unnatural in his minister Salankayana's intervening and preventing his troops from killing him. In those days, the commands of kings and generals prevailed over the people's likes and dislikes. Abhinavagupta (10th century) of Kashmir refers to Bhasa as a *mahakavi* (great poet) and alludes to the *krida* (the ball game in Act II) in *Svapnavasavadatta* and also to a play called *Daridracharudatta* by Bhasa. He quotes a verse from a Ramayana play of Bhasa. That verse is not found in the present *Abhisheka* or *Pratima* and may be from one of the missing plays or probably from *Abhisheka* or less probably from *Pratima*, omitted in copying and therefore missing from the present Trivandrum versions.

Saradatanaya (11th century) in his discussion of the plot of a *Svapna Nataka* (Dream play) in his *Bhavaprakasa*, seems to refer mainly to the *Svapnavasavadatta* of Bhasa.

Bhojadeva (11th century) in his *Sringaraprakasa* has mentioned some incidents from a *Svapna Nataka*, which must refer only to the scene in the Ocean Pavilion in Act V of *Svabnavasavadatta*. Ramachandra and

Gunachandra (12th century A. D.) have, in their *Natyadarpana,* mentioned *Svapnavasavadatta* specifically as a play by Bhasa, and have referred to the *sephalika* flowers and the stone bench found in Act IV. Sagaranandin (13th century) appears to have summarised the Prelude to Act I of *Svapnavasavadatta,* though in his own words.

Jayadeva (1200 A. D.) in his *Prasannaraghava,* refers to Bhasa as a humourist among poets (*Bhaso hasa:*) and to Kalidasa as the chief among poets (*Kavikulaguru).*

*References to several other plays*—*Sakuntavyakhya,* a work of the 14th century, quotes from *Charudatta, Duta ghatotkacha, Pancharatra, Balacharita, Svapnavasavadatta* and *Avimaraka.* The very words from the prelude to Act I of *Svapnavasavadatta* are quoted.

*Anthologies*—Ancient Anthologies quote fifteen verses from Bhasa's plays, without mentioning the plays from which they are extracted.

Thus, we have references to Bhasa and his works from writers coming from Kashmir Nepal, Malwa, Magadha, Bengal, Gujerat, Kathiawar, Maharashtra and Madras. All are agreed in describing him as an immortal poet and dramatist, and a *muni* (sage) like Vyasa and Kapila. It is significant that Bhasa is not his name, any more than Valmiki and Vyasa are the names of those sages, and that Bhasa is only a *gotra* name, like Patanjali, Yaugandharayana etc. the *Bhasa gotra* being a branch of the *Agastya gotra.*

That Bhasa wrote plays entitled *Pratijna Yaugandharayana, Svapnavasavadatta* and *Charudatta,* is also

beyond dispute, even the critics merely contending that the Trivandrum plays of those names are not the plays written by Bhasa.

*Not creations of Chakkiyars:*—Some critics regard the plays as the creations of *Chakkiyars*, the actors on the Kerala stage. I cannot agree with them at all. I am satisfied that none of these thirteen plays could have been creations or compilations of the *Chakkiyars*.

Mahamahopadhyaya Kuppuswami Sastri, in supporting the Chakkiyar origin of the plays, fancied that he saw a resemblance to an old Nayar lady in Mahasena's queen Angaravati and thought that the use of the word "*Sambandha*" for marriage meant the same thing as "*Sambandha*" among modern Nayars and indicated clearly the Kerala origin of *Pratijna Yaugandharayana* and *Svapnavasavadatta*. The argument is most unconvincing. The word "*sambandha*' is used by extremely orthodox Brahmins of the Mitakshara (patriarchal) school to indicate marriage. Again in the Kerala matriarchal system, the queen is of a lower caste than the king. But here Angaravati is the head of 16 queens and is treated as an equal by Udayana Vatsaraja, recognised by the Buddha as a *Kshatriya* of pure blood. What is more, in Act II of *Pratijna Yaugandharayana*, the King says, "If a daughter remains unmarried, she causes shame. When she is married and goes away to her husband's house, we are grieved," thus showing the typical patriarchal state. No Kerala Nayar ever worried in those days about marrying off his daughters. Nor was it a father's

duty, as Mahasena took it to be. The King says to the queen, "Now, now, having always urged me to give her in marriage, why do you feel distressed now?" The Queen replies, " I did wish to give her in marriage. Yet, the thought of parting pains me". In the old Kerala matriachal system, there was no question of parting, as the girl remained in her own house with her mother even after marriage. I need hardly add that nothing characteristic of Kerala is even mentioned in all the 13 plays, like pepper or cocoanut oil or *aviyal* or *pappadam* or *nendran* fruits, or Bhagavati temple or Kalari.

*Plays of calibre beyond that of Chakkiyars;*—Nor were the *Ckakkiyars* men of such calibre as could have produced any of the thirteen plays. The claim that the *Chakkiyars* have written or compiled several such plays has not been substantiatcd by the production of any similar series, or, indeed, of a single play of merit comparable to any of these. All credit to the *Chakkiyars* who preserved these masterpieces of Bhasa in Malayalam alphabet so carefully and lovingly and with so little omission or addition, and enabled Mahamahopadhyaya Ganapati Sastri to discover them and earn the eternal gratitude of all lovers of Sanskrit and good literature! Let it not be taken away by the contention of over-zealous critics that these care-takers constructed the temple !

*Plays not written by Pandya or Pallava court Poets:*—It is also absurd to say that some court poet in the court of Narasimhavarman Pallava II or Tenmaran

Pandya wrote these plays, simply basing it on the fact that these two kings are known to have called themselves *Rajasimhas* and that the plays contain some Sanskrit words of Southern origin, or Sanskrit words with southern meanings. History does not know the name of any great Sanskrit poet in the courts of these two kings who could have written such exquisite plays like *Svapna-vasavadatta*, *Pratijna Yaugandharayana*, *Charudatta* or *Avimaraka*. It is impossible to believe that if a poet of such ability existed in those courts and wrote those plays, he would have kept his name secret, when even great souls like Kambar affixed their names to their works and when from at least the first century A. D. it was the practice among Indian writers to mention their names in the prologues of the plays, as Asvaghosha, Kalidasa, and Bhavabhuti did in the North, and Sakthibhadra, Mahendra varman, and others did in the South. It is still more strange that these alleged southern authors, living in the courts of the Pallava and Pandya kings, did not mention the capitals of their kings, Kanchi or Madurai, though both were famous all through India and Kanchi was even called the "Model City" (*Nagareshu Kanchi*), or the rivers, mountains and temples of their regions. It is curious also that they, while not knowing about Kanchi or Madurai or the Godavari or Krishna or Kaveri or the Pandya, Chola, Chera, Pallava, Ganga and other kingdoms of the south, knew about Anga, Avanti, Uttarakuru, Kambhoja, Kasi, Kuntibhoja, Kuru, Kuru-jangala, Kosala, Gandhara, Vanga, Vatsa, Videha, Surasena, Sourashtra, Sauvira and Ayodhya and about

Ujjain, Kampilya, Kausambi, Pataliputra, Mathura, Rajagriha, Vairantya, Viratanagara and Hastinapura, and knew about kings like Udayana Vatsaraja, Darsaka and Pradyota, but not about Karikala, Nedunjelian, Senguttuvan, Mahendravarman, Narasimhavarman, Tenmaran or Varaguna Pandya. The theory has only to be stated to be rejected forthwith as utterly unworthy of consideration.

*All the 13 are Genuine Plays of Bhasa:*—I am satisfied that all these thirteen plays are genuine plays of Bhasa, though there is reason to suppose that Bhasa himself wrote only *Svapnavasavadatta* and *Pratijna Yaugandharayana completely*, judging by the uniform excellence exhibited therein, and that his disciples and coadjutors wrote portions of the other plays. which show the hand of the master only in parts, just as *Pericles, Timon of Athens, Antony and Cleopatra, Henry IV, Henry VIII* and other plays show Shakespeare's hand only in parts, the remaining parts being written by his disciples. Of course, in olden days, great masters, whether in drama or in painting, were not very particular, like the moderns, in keeping their works distinct, and allowed disciples to join with them, just as they freely re-wrote or re-touched their disciples' works. Thus, Shakespeare allowed Kyd, Fletcher, Marlowe and Massinger to write portions of some of the plays attributed to him.

*Common characteristics:*—I shall briefly touch on the main common characteristics found in these plays

referring the readers who want detailed information to Dr. Pusalker's excellent book "Bhasa—A study."

*Beginning with Verse after Nandi*:—All these plays, except Charudatta, begin after the *Nandi* (opening), with a benedictory verse uttered by the *Sutradhara* or stage-Director.

*Preludes and Interludes*:—The preludes and interludes are brief, and are cleverly used to tell the audience what has occurred between the Acts.

*Epilogues*:—The *Bhartavakyam* (epilogue) in all the plays, where it exists, has the same common sentiments, namely, the desire that the king, usually styled Rajasimha and said to be ruling from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas and from sea to sea, should conquer the whole world (meaning India) and repel all forein invasions, that the *dharma* of each caste and man should be protected, and that cows and good men should be rendered happy.

*Bharata's Rules not observed*:—The rules laid down by Bharata regarding dramas are broken in several respects. Deaths, duels, and battles are shown on the stage; and water is brought on the stage for ablutions, or worship, or making vows, or even to wash a tear-stained face, as in *Svapnavasavadatta*.

*Words with peculiar meanings*:- Some words like "Aryaptura", are given, in many of the plays, meanings quite different from those given in Bharata's *Natyasastra*.

*"Go and Return" Device*:—Rapid progress in action is secured by making some characters 'go and return' without any intervening progress in the play,

*Akasabhashita*:—Frequent recourse is had to *akasa-bhshaita*, that is, a kind of monologue in which a person on the stage speaks or replies to persons not on the stage, or hears supernatural voices, as in *Avimaraka*.

*Descriptions of Events*:—Clever use is made of narrations of captures, battles, duels, etc., by angels or Brahmans, or fairies or soldiers, so graphically indeed, that an illusion is created in the minds of the audience, that characters who have never appeared on the stage, like Udayana and Vasavadatta in the *Pratijna*, have been there all the time.

*Unintentional Dramatic replies*:—A common but effective dramatic device in many of these plays is to give the reply to a moot question by an unintentional and unexpected answer supplied by a new arrival. Thus, when Mahasena and Angaravati discuss which of the kings who have applied for Vasavadatta's hand is to be chosen, the chamberlain comes and says: "Vatsaraja", thereby unconsciously stating that Vatsaraja is the person to be chosen as bridegroom though he has come to say "Vatsaraja has been captured". So too, in *Abhish.ka Nataka*, when Rama and Lakshmana have been reported to Sita, by Ravana, as killed by Indrajit, and Ravana asks Sita in triumph "By whom will you be now set free?", a Rakshasa, who enters just then, says "By Rama", though he has come to say "By Rama, Indrajit has been killed."

*Names of some characters the same*:—The names of the minor characters in some of the plays are the same.

Thus, Badarayana is the name of the chamberlain of Mahasena in *Pratijna*, as well as of Duryodhana in *Dutavakya*; Vijaya is the name of the female door-keeper in *Svapna*, *Pratijna*, *Abhisheka* and *Pratima*. Vrishabhadatta and Kumbhadatta are the names of herdsmen in *Pancharatra* and *Balacharita*.

*Similar Dramatic Situations*:—There are some similar dramatic situations in these plays. In *Abhisheka* and *Pratima*, Sita rejects Ravana's overtures, with a curse; so too, Vasantasena rejects Sakara's overtures, with a curse, in *Charudatta*. When asked to salute their king, the heroes, in both *Balacharita* and *Pancharatra*, indignantly ask, "*Whose* king is he?". In *Pratijna*, Mahasena refuses to believe the news of the capture of Vatsaraja till Badarayana asks him whether he has ever told him a lie before. So, too, in *Balacharita*, Kamsa refuses to believe in the birth of a daughter to Devaki till the chamberlain asks him a similar question. In *Avimaraka*, there is a discussion between the king and queen about a suitable bridegroom for their daughter, just as there is in *Pratijna*.

*Common Words and Images*:—Favorite images are repeated, like the arrival of a distinguished personage being composed to the rising of the moon in the midst of the stars. Duryodhana, Valin and Dasaratha all see the sacred rivers and aerial chariot arrive for them at death. Several words are used with the same peculiar meaning, like *Nandi* and *Sthapana*.

*Same Expressions*:—The same expressions "Make way, sirs, make way" are used when exalted personasge

arrive. There are some lines of verse and prose found in identical form in two or three of the plays, the epilogue being a leading instance, and the description of the uselessness of the keenest eyesight on a dark night, in *Avimaraka* and *Balacharita*. Certain things are described vividly in several plays more or less in the same style, like sunset, nightfall, a city at night, battles, combats, and battlefields.

*Similarity in Metrical Devices*:—Though the metres are varied, the plays show similarity in their use.

*Paronomasia*:—The opening stanzas in many of the plays indicate the leading characters by a clever use of paronomasia.

*Split-up verses*:—Split-up verses, by the same speaker or by more than one, are found.

*Author's Name not found*:—In no play is the name of the author given.

*Play's Name At End*:—The name of the play is given only at the end.

*Grammatical solecisms and archaisms*:—Grammatical solecisms and *prakrit* archaisms are found in all the plays.

*Common Ideals*:—The ideals, too, are the same in all the plays, namely, the desire for the independence of the country, the passion to keep foreign invaders out, the scoffing at begging for independence at others' hands, and the duty of kings to protect cows and to preserve the ancient *Varnasrama dharma* of the land, to honour hermits, to uphold justice, and to make good

men happy. The idea that virtuous kings, though dead in body, live through their works and sacrifices, recurs again and again.

The intrinsic similarities between the plays mentioned above and the fact that no author is mentioned in them and that the references of Bana, Dandin, Abhinavagupta, Sagaranandin, and Saravananda could only have been to *Abhisheka*, *Pratijna*, *Svapna*, *Charudatta* and other Trivandrum plays, leave no doubt that these are genuine plays of Bhasa. Some critics have even doubted the excellence of the plays like *Svapnavasavadatta*, *Pratijna* and *Avimaraka*. The fact that these plays are now being published rapidly by various presses and persons in India and are as popular as Kalidasa's plays will be an objective test of their excellence. A reading of the plays will convince any discriminating reader of their excellence. To say that they are ordinary humdrum plays produced by third rate dramatists is to show one's own incapacity to judge merit.

As we have seen, Bana of the 7th century had already referred to the many plays of Bhasa two centuries before Saktibhadra wrote his *Ascharyachudamani*, the first Sanskrit play written by a South Indian, and that *Ehamaha* of the 8th century and the *Avantisundarikatha* of the 8th century had referred to Bhasa and his many plays. Bana's description of Bhasa's plays as "beginning with benedictory verses spoken by the stage directors and containing numerous and varying characters and stirring episodes, and pervaded by a holy atmosphere like

temples," neatly fits in with the contents of the 13 Trivandrum plays discovered by Ganapati Sastri. So, too, the statement in the *Avantisundarikatha* that "Bhasa was living through his dramas which had taken several shapes and forms" fits in with the 13 Trivandrum plays, which are of various kinds, like *Nataka, Prakarana, Vyayoga* etc. *Dutavakya* is a *Vyayoga* or *Vithi* like *Madhyamavyayoga*; *Karnabhara* is a *Utsrishtikanka* like *Dutaghatotkacha* and *Urubhanga*. *Pancharatra* is a *Samavakara*. *Abhisheka* is a *Nataka* like *Balacharita*, *Avimaraka*, *Pratima*, and *Swapnavasavadatta*; and *Charudatta*, and *Pratima*, are *Prakaranas*.

*Missing Stanzas*:—That some stanzas ascribed to Bhasa by the anthologists are not to be found in these thirteen plays will not show that these plays are not Bhasa's. Perhaps only ten of the verses found in the anthologies are really Bhasa's, as pointed out by Dr. Pusalker. It is notorious that anthologists have wrongly ascribed verses of one author to another, nothing to be wondered at when printing was not known, manuscripts were rare, and knowledge was largely transmitted by oral means, and retained by memory which plays so many tricks. There is also the probability that copyists omitted some verses and passages just as even now copyists omit passages when preparing copies of records. Some of the copyists might have omitted, in addition, some of the stanzas which were objected to by critics, or passages not agreeing with their views, and also added or altered some verses, in a vain attempt to improve on them or to put the current niceties into them. The thing is not peculia

to India. Even in England, a much smaller country, with only one main centre, London, Shakespeare's plays, written eighteen hundred years later, suffered omissions and additions at the hands of scribes, pirates and others. We can imagine how much more would have been the case in a country like India, 16 times the size of England, and with at least 56 major kings, who had their own courts and exclusive dramatic performances. Even Kalidasa's *Sakuntala*, so well loved by Indians and so carefully treasured, has got various recensions, some omitting many portions and some adding enormous passages. It is only the Vedas which are preserved intact at least for the past 3000 years, owing to their sacred nature and a wonderful system of memorisation and cross-verification, like *ghanam*, *jata* etc. Even the Vedas appear to have been subjected to addition, alteration and amendment before this check and counter-check system was introduced. It must also be remembered that only 13 plays of Bhasa have been recovered out of the 23 or 30 plays he wrote, and that some of the verses found in the anthologies might well have been from the undiscovered plays, though some of them are certainly from the *Pratima*, *Abhisheka* and *Svapna*.

*Controversy not peculiar to Bhasa*:—It need hardly be said that such controversies are not peculiar to India or to Bhasa. Even regarding Shakespeare, certain scholors have attempted to prove that he did not write his plays and that be was a third-rate poetaster and actor and that his famous plays were written by Bacon or Marlowe. Recently, an American scholar even obtained permission

of the Church authorities to open the grave of Walsingham in the fond hope of finding all the 36 or 37 plays of Shakespeare in it written by Marlowe and dedicated to his patron, Walsingham. He actually opened the grave, though in vain. When that is the case even regarding Shakespeare, who lived only 350 years ago, is it any wonder that such a controversy has raged about Bhasa?

Dr. Barradeile Keith, after discussing the evidence regarding the authorship of these plays by Bhasa, says:—"These facts are, it must at once be admitted, extremely favourable to the authenticity of the dramas; taken all in all, they are clearly the work of a very considerable writer; in technique they are less finished than those of Kalidasa; the Prakrit is clearly earlier than that of the works of Kalidasa or the *Mrichchakatika*; the *Svapnavasavadatta* is clearly the best, and it explains the Vakpati and Rajasekhara references. Bana's statement regarding the opening of the plays by the *Sutradhara* is proved by the dramas. There is also substantial evidence to be derived from the writers on rhetoric. The ascription of the *Svapnavasavadatta* to Bhasa gives us the right to accept his authorship of the rest if internal evidence supports it. That this is so is undeniable, even by those who suspect the attribution to Bhasa; the coincidences in technique, in the prakrits, in the metre and in style are overwelming. The *Charudatta* is undeniably and obviously the prototype of the *Mrichchakatika*. The arguments against the authenticity are all inconclusive. The proofs of Bhasa's authorship are too many to be ignored, and to ignore these and to leave us with an anonymous dramist of the

highest Indian writing is to demand too much from probability". Prof Paranjpye has said, "The *Ascharya-chudamani* of Saktibhadra and the *Uunatta Vasavadatta*, *Veena Vasavadatta*, and *Mattavilasa Prahasana* and other plays based on Bhasa cannot be confused with his, as the ideas and expressions, words and phrases, characterisation and plot construction have very little in common with the salient features of the Bhasa plays." Saktibhadra wrote his *Ascharyachudamani* in the 9th century, openly proclaiming himself to be a South Indian, (*Dakshinatya*) and jubilantly exclaiming that the impossible had happened and a South Indian had produced a Sanskrit play, that oil had been produced by crushing rock etc., thus showing that no Sanskrit play had been produced by an indigenous South Indian till then.

Some Western critics have wondered whether these plays could be so old as the 4th century B. C. and indeed whether Bhasa himself could have flourished in the 4th century B. C., and some Indian scholars have followed suit. This habit of doubting the ancient dates ascribed to Indian literary works, including the Vedas, was common among the Western critics during the days of India's subjection to British rule, as nobody could believe that people of a dependent country could have produced such works of high merit centuries before its conquerors became civilised. There is nothing intrinsically improbable in Bhasa's being of the 4th Century B. C. and writing these plays. Even in Rigvedic times, which cannot be put later than 1500 B. C., hymns were recited by individuals, enacting them in the way of school

boys enacting action plays now. In the Atharva Veda, ceremonial dances with appropriate recitations were prescribed. Such were the beginnings of the drama in ancient India as in ancient Greece. By the time of the *Brahmanas*, rudimentary plays had come into existence. A Brahmin wants to buy a *soma* plant from a Sudra, who had plucked it from the hills. Much higgling goes on about the price. Finally the Brahmin gets impatient and plucks the *Soma* plant forcibly from the Sudra, and then the price is agreed to by the Sudra and paid, and the *Soma* is carried in procession to the sacrificial spot. So too, a Vysya higgles for a piece of leather from a Sudra and there is much animated discussion. Finally, the Vysya takes the leather by force, and the Sudra comes to terms and settles the price. Meanwhile a Brahmin is found with a dancing girl in a corner and this puts both the Vysya and the Sudra into good humour after the quarrel. At the *Mahavrata* Fast, this play was enacted. By the time of Panini, who cannot be put later than 500 B. C., two *Natyasutras*, regarding the theory of dramas, had been compiled by Sitali and Krisasva. By the time of the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali (2nd century B. C.) regular acting of dramas like *Kamsavadha* and *Balibandhanam* had come into vogue. I should not be surprised if the *Kamsavadha* referred to therein was the *Balacharita* of Bhasa which also deals with *Kamsavadha.* When Greece had dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides in the 5th century B. C. what is to be wondered at in India having dramas in the 4th century B. C.? Bhasa's dramas show such high

development of technique that the drama must have been in existence for at least three centuries before. The *Natyasastra* says that Indra and other gods wanted to create a fifth Veda, *Natyaveda*, so that the Sudras, who could not read the four Vedas, might have some Veda to regale themselves with. The introduction of *Prakrit* and lay themes and of the jester was undoubtedly indended for the masses, who were Sudras.

For the reasons gived above, I am unable to agree either with Dr. Keith in his putting the date of these plays as late as the third century A. D., or with Dr. Pusalker in his conclusion that these plays were written in the days of Mahapadmananda. I hold that these plays were written late in the fourth century B. C., in the days of Chandragupta Maurya. There might be a few additions, omissions and alterations in the course of centuries, but the plays, as recovered, are substantially as Bhasa wrote them.

*How Many Plays Did He Write?* One tradition has it that Bhasa wrote 23 plays, and another has it that he wrote 30 plays. There is nothing very surprising in this. seeing that Shakespeare has written 37 plays, Aeschylus 90, Sophocles 100 and Euripldes 92, though in the case of Aeschylus. Sophocles and Euripides, only 7 or 8 plays have come down to us completely, like these 13 plays of Bhasa out of the 23 or 30 plays he wrote, It may be that the large number was, as in the case of Shakespeare, due to some portions of the plays being written by others,

either colleagues or disciples. The fame of Bhasa made people imitate him, *Yajnaphala* being by one such late imitator (*Bhasanusari*) as we shall see.

No Devanagari manuscripts of any of the genuine plays of Bhasa have been discovered so far in India or abroad. Dr. V. Raghavan, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Madras University, very recently made an exhaustive search in all the great centres of Sanskrit in Europe for Sanskrit manuscripts, and found not a single mannscript of Bhasa's plays. As already stated, the Muslim conquerors must have destroyed all the Devanagiri manuscripts of these plays all over India except the extreme South, In Tamil Nad, there was never much love for Sanskrit, and the Tamil script with its 23 letters is most unsuited for copying these Sanskrit plays. But, in strong contrast to this, Kerala is noted for its passionate love of Sanskrit among all classes, Brahmins and Non-Brahmins, though adjoining Tamilnad. This will also account why these plays, so interesting in contents and so artistic in form, were preserved there and enacted by the *Chakkiyars* the hereditary actors of Kerala. Plays enacted in Sanskrit can even now be well understood by the masses better in Kerala than anywhere else in India. So nobody need be surprised that Kerala was the last refuge for these plays.

## The Chronology of the Plays so far Discovered

Mr. Pusulker has made an attempt to arrange the thirteen plays in the order in which Bhasa might have

written them. He has put them in the following order:—

*Dutavakya Karnabhara, Dutaghatotkacha, Urubhanga, Madhyamavyayoga, Pancharatra, Abhishekanataka, Balacharita, Avimaraka, Pratima, Pratijna, Svapnavasavadatta*, and *Charudatta*, which last, is of course, incomplete, and was perhaps left like that owing to Bhasa's death. The points taken into consideration by him in arranging the plays, in this order, are the matter and manner of the plays, the extent of their maturity. and consideration of the dialogues, verses poetic licenses and weak endings.

I have to differ from his order. After a careful consideration of the contents of the plays, and especially the *Bharatavakyas*, I arrange them in the following order which, according to me, shows a progressive development in subject, skill, technique and originality: *Dutaghatotkacha, Karnabhara, Madhyamavyayoga, Urubhanga, Dutavakya, Pancharatra, Balacharita, Abhisheka, Pratijna, Avimaraka, Pratima, Svapna, and Charudatta.* Arranged in that order, they show a progressive growth in dramatic technique, skill and originality. The earlier themes are generally taken from the Epics, and the latter themes from folklore and popular legends. The progression is something like that of Shakespeare from plays like *Titus Andronicus* and *Julius caesar* to plays like the *Tempest, Much Ado About Nothing, Cymbeline,* and *The Winter's Tale* through tragedies like *Hamlet* and *Othello.* I shall now briefly peal with each play.

*Dutaghatotkacha*, which has no Bharatavakya at all and is much cruder and less interesting than the other plays, and differs from the remaining eleven plays, like *Karnabhara*, must have been Bhasa's first attempt. He has, like many amateurs, tried to rival a famous episode, Krishna's Embassy, in the Mahabharata by inventing the Embassy of Ghatotkacha. It is more a sketch than a drama, and there is no action but the taunting of an envoy and his departure in indignation, as remarked by Woolner and Sarup in their "Thirteen Trivandrum Plays attributed to Bhasa".

Then we come to *Karnabhara*. It is a much more striking play and is pervaded by a haunting tragic note. The play may almost be called, "Karna's Burdan", or 'Karna finds life a burden and rides to death". It must therefore have been written after *Dutaghatotkacha*. But it too differs in several respects from the other eleven plays and must have been the second play to be written. Its Bharatavakya does not mention Rajasimha or his ruling the country between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas and from sea to sea. That too shows it to be earlier than the other eleven plays.

The next in order will be *Madhyamavyayoga* which has Ghatothacha again as hero but shows a greater action and has three dramatic situations, namely, a father fighting his son or about to fight him, another father showing less preference for the middle son, and a son seeking a human victim for his mother's cannibalism out of obedieuce to her though he abhors cannibalism himself. There is here

an attempt to imitate Rama's impliocit obedience to his father. The Bharatavakya praises Vishnu and has no reference to Rajasimha or his ruling the country between the Himalayas and Vindhyas and from sea to sea.

The next play must have been *Urubhanga* which has a Bharatavakya containing a prayer for the protection of cows (Vishnu or Gopal is the protector of cows, and Bhasa had begun to think of writing the *Balacharita*, of Gopala) and no reference to Rajasimha. It is a powerful tragedy, where Bhasa depicts Duryodhana in a better light than in the epic. His tender scene with his son Durjaya, and his disapproval of Asvathama's suggestion to murder the young Pandavas in bed, show this.

The next is *Dutavakya.* Bhasa has learnt the futility of imitating and bettering Krishna's Embassy, as he tried to do in *Dutaghatotkacha*, and has written about this theme so popular with the public. It has got a Baratavakya with a direct reference to Rajasimha's ruling the land between the Himalaya and the Vindhyas and from sea to sea. This play must have been written in cannection with the Coronation of Chandragupta consequent on the defeat of the Nandas after the failure of Chanakya's negotiations with Rakshasa for a peaceful settlement of the dispute. Dhritarashtra in the play may refer to the old King Sarvarthasiddhi who was anxious, to make peace and placate Chandragupta unlike his son Dhananda who resembled Duryodhana in his avarice greed and implacable hostility (to Chandrogupta).

After these five one-act, plays comes *Pancharatra*, a three act play which has a covert reference to Chandragupta's marriage to Durdhara, the Nanda princess, and of the two mighty families (of the Mauryas and the Nandas) uniting together, justifying the exultant exclamation of Drona. "O joy ! Now are all content in the union of the mighty houses. May our lion-like King rule over this earth !"

*Balacharita*, a five-act play of great originality, comes next with the same Bharatavakya as *Dutavakya*. Then come *Abhisheka*, a six-act play based on the Ramayana, the *Pratijna*, a four-act play based on a story from folk-lore, and the *Avimaraka*, another six-act play from folk-lore, written during the time of the invasion of India by Seleukos and the war waged against him by Chandragupta ending with the Battle of the Indus and the rout of Seleukos and the annexation of Afghanistan and Baluchistan by Chandragupta. The Bharatavakya, "May the King be free from troubles ! May the foreign army be routed and may our lion-like king rule the entire earth !" in these three plays is thus appropriate. *Avimaraka* probably refers also covertly to the marriage of Chandragupta with a daughter of Seleukos. The anxiety of her father to marry off Kurangi is reminiscent of the anxiety of Mahasena to marry off Vasavadatta, and shows *Avimaraka* to have been written immediately after *Pratijna*.

*Pratima Nataka*, a seven act play based on the Ramayana, was the next. Critics had perhaps attacked Bhasa for the radical changes in the Mahabharata plays

from the story as given in the epic. So, in *Abhisheka* he had stuck faithfully to the epic. Then the critics must have pointed out how it was a slavish imitation. So, Bhasa made some striking changes of theme and technique in the *Pratima*. It has perhaps a covert reference to Chandragupta's ancestors and their tombs. It is a mistake to think that only the Kushans and Pallavas had such tombs and statues. The Buddha has referred to tombs erected for Kings and Emperors, and we have other evidence of such statues also. When *Pratima* was written, the enemy had been routed. In the Bharatavakya, "As Rama was united with Janaka's daughter and his kin, so may our King rule the earth in conjunction with the goddess of beauty and prosperity !" we have, as in *Avimaraka*, a hint about the marriage of Chandragupta with the daughter of Seleukos.

*Svapna* was written next with the same Bharatavakya as *Dutavakya* and *Balacharita*. Its maturity shows that it must have been written when Bhasa was in possession of his fullest powers, as that is the best of his plays in theme, technique, plot, ideas, felicity of expression etc,

*Charudatta* was the last work of Bhasa and was left unfinished. Its abrupt ending shows that, Sudraka has completed it in his *Mrichchhakatika* of the sixth century A. D. It is obvious from even a cursory reading of *Charudatta* that it is older than the *Mrichchhakatika* and that it could never be a summary or multilated version of the *Mrichchhakatika* as contended by some scholars. The

fact of the *Charudatta* being the predecessor of the *Mrichchhakatika* will also show that all the thirteen Trivandrum plays, which have a family resemblance and must be by the same dramatist, must be much older than the *Mrichchakatika* and could never be productions by South Indian poets of the 7th to 11th centuries A. D. as contended by some. The four Acts of *Charudatta* which Bhasa wrote show his power in full. It is a pity he did not live to complete the play and add one more gem to Sanskrit literature.

## Bhasa's Stage.

Now a few words about Bhasa's stage. It is not quite clear whether Bhasa's *Natya Sastra*, which contains detailed rules regarding the production of Plays, existed at the time of Bhasa, or came into being only later. But there is no doubt that there was a living theatrical tradition even in Bhasa's days, though the rules regarding a dramatist not writing more than three Plays, and not writing a Play ending in tragedy had not come into force. There were no *public* theatres. Plays were staged on occasions of great festivities, religious or lay, in palaces and temples, and sometimes in streets or open *maidans*, as even now. *Daily shows* were not known. There were stages in temples where plays could be enacted. Ancient Indians did not believe, like the Greeks, in *big* theatres, as much depended on gesture and *rasa* and intonation, and these would suffer by too much distance from the actors. The pavilions, or *pandals*, for the spectators, were supported on stone or bamboo pillars.

Scenery was *elementary*, though a cart was displayed on the stage in *Mrichhakatika*, and bark garments in *Pratima Nataka* and a toy elephant in *Pratijna*. There was much music and buffoonery to entertain the audience. The plays began with a prayer to God and ended usually with a prayer for the King, Kingdom and people.

As emperor Harsha has stated in his Play, *Priya-darsika*, four things were considered essential for the success of a Play, namely, a well-known and gripping plot, a famous author skilled in verses and sentiments. clever actors and actresses, and a cultured audience. The *stage* is not referred to as an important element. Women (dancing girls) generally took the female parts. *Natya* technique was widely used. Characters coloured themselves blue, white, yellow, brown, red or black, according to the caste, race and region. Gods, demons and sages had their set colours and costumes. Time and place did not count much. People were in one scene in *Indraloka* and in the next scene in this world. Often, many years elapse between scenes. Much was left to imagination. A Play was a *play*, and too much realism was not insisted on provided the action was convincing. There were no tickets or charges, and the performances were usually from 10 P. M to 4 A. M. People attended after dinner and sat on carpets or on the bare floor and slept in the middle but did not miss much of the play owing to repetition.

## Bhasa's Caste and Country.

*His Caste*—Very little is known definitely about the personal history of this great poet and dramatist. Like

Valmiki, Vyasa, Kapila and Kalidasa, Bhasa too has not cared to give us any details of his life. Most probably, he was a Brahman of Bhasa gotra, a branch of Agastya gotra. His firm belief in *Varnashramadharma* and Vedic sacrifices, his prayers for the prosperity of Brahmans and cows, his exalting the claims of Brahmans all show this. In several plays, the fact that the speaker is a Brahman is urged as a reason for holding that the thing spoken must be true, and this argument is accepted as valid, showing Bhasa to be a Brahman. Nay, Kamsa says "Aye, a Brahman's word I hold as true though it be false." The Brahmans figure in the plays very frequently, far more than their number will warrant; this also shows Bhasa to be a Brahman.

*In Balacharita* Krishna is wroth against Kaliya as he battens on Brahmans. In *Pratima*, the attendant of the Statue-house mistakes Bharata, by his noble appearance, to be a Brahman, and asks him not to worship the statues in the statue-house, as they are not of gods, but only of Kshatriya kings, another sign that Bhasa is a Brahman. This is also proved by a passage in *Karnabhara*. Karna at first refuses to accept a spear sent by Indra in return for the armour and ear-rings given to him. He says, "Fie! I do not take a return for a gift." Indra's angel says "Nay take it at a Brahman's bidding". Then Karna accepts it, saying "At a Brahman's bidding? That have I never disregarded." The portrayal of the Brahman family in *Madhyamavyayoga* also proves Bhasa to be a Brahman. So too, the praise of a king who gives away all his wealth to Brahmans and keeps but his bow

for himself, in *Pancharatra*, as well as Bhishma's statement that Drona should be given the first honours as he is a Brahman, and Arjuna's statement that the glory of Yudhishthira is increased by his Brahman's garb! Abhimanyu changes his disrespect for Virata, into respect on being told that he is sitting with a Brahman.

In *Pratijna*, the feeding of Brahmans is done for relieving the king from his calamity, and sure enough, it does so, by Vedavyasa's coming as a madman and leaving his robes behind, to enable Yaugandharayana to change his appearance and to go to Ujjaini unnoticed and save Udayana from prison. The jester cries out, in Act III, "To be a Brahman is to be low down now-a-days", the age-long cry of the Brahman.

In *Svapna* Udayana calls Vasantaka "O great Brahman" and treats him with great respect.

In *Charudatta*, Charudatta is described proudly, as having only his sacred thread as his upper cloth.

*His Country*—Which part of India did Bhasa come from? As seen already, he must have hailed only from North India, and could not possibly have been from South India, of whose mountains, rivers, rulers, peoples and towns he has but the faintest glimmerings. He must have come from some region between the Ganges, Yamuna and Narmada, the only three rivers he names, and was most probably a Brahman of Kausambi on the Jumna, seeing his praise of the Bharata line of kings of Vatsa, and his taking the plots of his two most famous plays from Vatsa history. Of course, he knew Ujjaini, Ayodhya,

Kasi, Rajagriha and Pataliputra well, but Vatsa was evidently, his home-land with whose topographical details, like the situation of Lavanaka, etc., he is most familiar.

## Greatness of Bhasa

*General*:—Bhasa was certainly one of the great immortals, like Shakespeare or Kalidasa. He plumbed the human heart in its depths as well as in its shallows, in its great virtues as well as in its gross depravities, in moments of supreme anger as well as of love and pity. There is no emotion which he has not depicted beautifully. The tense dramatic situations; the profound psychological insight; the great ideals; the felicity of language; the flights of fancy; the wonderful depicting of emotions, like love, anger, pity, loyalty, surprise, sarcasm, heroism, terror and serenity; the exquisite pen-portraits of natural phenomena, like the midday sun, sunset, moonrise, night-fall, clouds, the ocean, stars in the sky, the flights of birds, and of flowers in bloom; vignettes showing men and things in many striking and natural situations, comic and tragic, taken from life in the flow; the graphic narration of the activities of persons who never appear on the stage, but seem to the audience to be always there; the exquisite delineation of innumerable characters from gods and kings to servants and animals; the uncompromising stand made for righteousness, human dignity, self-rule, freedom from foreign rule, and protection of animals and men: the kindly treatment of subordinates and servants; the actability of the plays; all proclaim Bhasa to be a master not inferior to Shakespeare or Kalidasa or Goethe.

## Comparison with Kalidasa[1]

A comparison of Bhasa with the other great dramatist of India, Kalidasa, who had read Bhasa deeply, and has, consciously or unconsciously, reproduced many a famous scene and idea from Bhasa, in his plays, like *Sakuntala*, *Vikramorvasiya* and *Malavikagnimitra*, and other works, like *Meghasandesa* and *Raghuvamsa*, will be of great interest. Bhasa's mind belonged to the Vedas and early puranas. It was theological, satisfied and optimistic. Kalidasa lived in other times, when the waters of India's cultural stream had become deeper and more turpid, and thought more complicated, and the Vedic nature gods were being displaced by highly metaphysical conceptions of Vishnu, Siva and Sakti. So, we do not find, in Kalidasa, the mere prayer to the old or new gods, taking faith in them as accepted, as in Bhasa. Instead we find metaphysical challenges thrown at a sceptical world to convert it into belief. The invocatory verse in *Sakuntala*, for instance, indirectly asks the atheist why he should be troubled about proofs of the existence of God, when there are eight direct pieces of evidence for His existence, in the earth, which supports all life; the air, which pervades all space; the fire which purifies and carries the offerings; the water which is the first of created things, being the creation of a new thing by a combination of two quite different things; the sun and the moon which regulate time; the sky in which everything is rooted, but whose root itself is not visible or perceptible; and the sacrificer who

1. For a full account, see my "Bhasa: Indian Men of Letters series".

works for others' good. Kalidasa does not ask "Are there not Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Agni, Varuna, Indra?", as Bhasa would have asked. Other times had come; other beliefs had gained ground; other modes of approach were required.

So, too, Bhasa's king is an autocrat working, no doubt, for the good of his people, according to the rules of righteousness, if he wanted his name to survive. Kalidasa's king is one who acts according to the wishes of his subjects. The concluding verse in Sakuntala runs:—"Let the king work for the good of his subjects, and go by their wishes; let the advice of wise and learned men of religion be honoured everywhere; let the self-created, blue throated Siva cancel my rebirth;" Bhasa stood for absolute monarchy, simple goodness, and unbounded optimism. Kalidasa stood for democratic monarchy, goodness based on knowledge and reasoned pessimism.

Bhasa was like the blue Jumna with its limpid waters a delight to see and lave in, but powerless to kill disease germs. Kalidasa was like the dark, turbid, mysterious Ganges, perilous to bathe or sport in, but, despite all its dirt, able to kill disease germs in the fraction of a second. Where these two rivers join is the most sacred spot in India, the *Triveni*. So, too, it is in the combination of Bhasa and Kalidasa that Indian Drama will be seen at its best.

## Bhasa's Message for Modern India

For Modern India, overloaded with pessimism and with the complexities of metaphysical thought, and

revelling in Sakti and Kali, even as Kalidasa did, the teachings of Bhasa, with their simple faith in Vishnu, have an added value, just as, when the pendulum is at one end, it must swing to the other end, to restore the correct equilibrium. No teaching is more valuable for India to-day than the strident teaching of Bhasa:— "Children of the land between the Himalayas and the sea, never lose your faith in God! Do your duty and leave the result to Him! There is nothing impossible for man, and, therefore, for you. Persistent effort will make even rock yield water. Rightly-directed effort never goes to waste. The mother and the motherland are holier far than heaven. There is nothing so degrading as foreign rule. Heaven is not a distant world. It is here in this world, for us to make good by work for *lokasangraha.* Hell is not a distant world. It is here, in this world, if we do not make good by work for *lokasangraha.* Honour your father and mother, teacher and guest, and this Bharat of ours with its eternal Dharma, and rise to your full stature as human beings. Awake, arise, aim aright, and reach the goal!"

## These Two Plays Are Bhasa's.

These two plays practically form one play, 'The Vision of Vasavadatta' being only a continuation of 'Yaugandharayana's Vows'. They are certainly among the best plays written by Sanskrit dramatists, and have a right to claim to be among the best plays of the world. The tense dramatic, situations; the plumbing of the human

1. Universal welfare?

heart in its various moods; the wonderful depicting of emotions, like love, anger, pity, loyalty, surprise, sarcasm, heroism, terror and serenity; the very charming pen-portraits of natural phenomena, like flights of birds, sunset, nightfall and stars in the sky; the vignettes from life, like the scene at the hermitage, Padmavati's marriage preparations, and the meeting of the conspirators in the temple; the graphic narration of the activities of persons who never appear on the stage, but seem to the audience to be always there, like Vatsaraja in 'Yaugandharayana's Vows'; the exquisite delineation of characters in various degrees of social life, from kings to servants; the uncompromising stand made for human dignity, self-rule, freedom from foreign rule, and protection of animals and men; the kindly treatment; of subordinates and servants; all proclaim these works to be those of a master not inferior to Shakespeare or Kalidasa or Goethe. That itself is sufficient reason for taking in hand the translation of these wonderful plays, and it may be, perhaps, unnecessary to consider whether Bhasa is their author, especially seeing the fierce controversy which has raged round the authorship of these two and the other eleven plays, discovered by Mahamahopadhyaya Ganapathi Sastri in 1909–1910.

The references to the events in "Yaugandharayana,s Vows" in "The Vision of Vasavadatta" are so numerous that both the plays were undoubtedly written by the same person. So, the positive proof that Bhasa wrote "The Vision of Vasavadatta" will also be conclusive proof that he wrote "Yaugandharayana's Vows," though nobody seems to have named that play specifically as a work of Bhasa.

## Differences Between the Plays.

These two plays, though forming one continuous whole differ *inter se* in their nature. "Yaugandharayana's Vows" is a masculine play, the only two women appearing on the stage being Vijaya and Angaravati, and not occupying much of the stage either. Wars and hunts, plots and conspiracies, vows and challenges, drinks and killings figure prominently in this play. The main sentiment is heroism, though the sentiments of surprice, anger and sarcasm also figures therein, with the sentiment of love kept as an under-current in the narration, by the jester of Vatsaraja's love for Vasavadatta. Though the play is named after Yaugandharayana, the hero is Vatsaraja and the heroine Vasavadatta, and the astounding fact is that neither of them appears on the stage, albeit an illusion is created in the minds of the audience that they are always there. "The Vision of Vasavadatta" on the other hand, is essentially feminine, and deals with the softer emotions of love, pity, and sorrow, though, of course, other sentiments also figure, notably surprise, sarcasm, and serenity.

## Both Based on Folklore.

These two plays are based upon the folklore of Ancient India and relate to the adventures of King Udayana of Vatsa. Unfortunately, we do not have the version of this story which prevailed in the 4th century B. C., the time of Bhasa. But, it is probable that the folklore version was reproduced fairly correctly in the *Brihat Katha* of Gunadhya, and later on, with some minor variations, in the *Katha Sarit Sagara* of Somadeva. If that is

so, Bhasa has changed many material details and enhanced the beauty of the story and its suitability for drama just as Shakespeare has similarly changed the crude stories of *Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth* and *Othello* when writing those famous Plays.

## FOLKLORE STORY

I give below a summary of the folklore story, as it is found in the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, and shall, later on mention briefly the chief changes made by our dramatist, and their significance. For the sake of convenience, I divide the story into four Parts.

The folk-lore story runs as follows:—

### PART I.

*(The events antecedent to "Yaugandharayana's Vows.")*

There was a famous King called Satanika,[1] a descendant of the Pandavas, ruling over the Vatsa country, with his capital at Kausambi. He had a son called, Sahasranika,[2] who married Mrigavati,[3] a daughter of the King of Kosala. When she was in the family way, she was subject to those inexplicable yearnings of ladies in that condition. One day, she felt a desire to bathe in a tank of blood. The king, being a righteous man, did not like to kill even animals to satisfy her craving, but, all the same, wanted to gratify her wishes. So, he had the

1 "A man with a hundred battalions." He is referred to by the Buddha as a pure blue-blooded Kshatriya monarch of his days.

2 "A man with a thousand battalions"

3 "Fawn-eyed."

queen's bath filled with the Indian lac, looking so similar to blood. The queen did not, of course, see the difference, and got into the bath to bathe.

When she was in the bath, she looked like a piece of meat floating in blood, to a huge roc bird flying about. It quickly pounced on her, and carried her away to the Udayagiri hills (now in the Ganjam Agency). On putting her on a peak, the bird saw, to its disgust, that it was a live human being, and not a piece of raw meat, and left her there, and flew away.

The queen, realising the justice of the punishment she had received for her desire to bathe in blood, was heart-broken, with grief, and wanted to hurl herself down a precipice, but desisted because of the child in the womb. A young disciple of the sage Jamadagni,[1] whose hermitage was near, passed that way, heard her agonising cries of sorrow, ascertained her story, and led her to the hermitage. There, she delivered a charming boy. At the time of his birth, a voice was heard from heaven :— "A King of great renown has been born, Udayana by name, and his son shall be the king of the Vidyadharas ![2]"

The boy grew in size and strength in the hermitage, and became the darling of all the inmates. Mrigavati took off from her own wrist a bracelet marked with the name of Sahasranika, and put it on his wrist. Jamadagni, himself

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1 Father of Parasurama. There is a hot sulphur spring at this spot, the Taptapani Ghat, even now.

2 A class of semi-divine beings.

taught the boy all the arts. Udayana roamed about, alone, in the forest, playing with deer and other wild animals, and fearless of anything on earth.

One day, he saw a huge snake captured by a Savara.[1] He asked the man to let the snake go, but he replied "I can't do so, my boy. I eke out my livelihood by selling snakes like this." Udayana then gave him his bracelet, and asked him to set the snake free. The overjoyed Savara at once did so, and went away with the bracelet.

The snake, which had been released, was a divine one, called Vasunemi, brother of Vasuki.[2] It gave Udayana, in token of its appreciation of his generosity in procuring its freedom, a divine lute called Ghoshavati, gifted to it by its brother, Vasuki, who had got it from Siva, the Lord of Music, as a present. That lute had many strings, divided according to half-tones and quarter-tones, and had the sweetest sounds ever produced by musical instruments, sounds which could captivate the wildest elephant and make it tame as a lamb. The snake taught Udayana the secret of playing on it exquisitely. It also gave him a magic formula which, if communicated to his loving wife, would render the betel leaf used by her ever green, the garland strung by her remain unfaded, and the *tilak*[3] mark put by her ever distinct. Then, it

1 The Savaras are an aboriginal tribe still occupying those hills. They are referred to by Pliny.

2 A divine snake which was used to churn the Sea of Milk and was a favourite with all gods.

3 A ceremonial crimson mark put by married Hindu ladies on their foreheads.

disappeared, and Udayana returned to the hermitage with its gifts.

The Savara went to the nearest town to sell the bracelet, and was at once arrested by a policeman, and taken to Kausambi and produced before the King, as the bracelet had his mark on it. Instead of punishing the man, the wise King questioned him, and ascertained from him wherefrom he had got it, and followed him to Udayagiri, to the hermitage of Jamadagni. The Sage welcomed the King, and handed over Mrigavati and Udayana to him. The King was overjoyed at having such a fine son. In course of time, he had him anointed as Crown Prince, and gave him as advisers Vasantaka, Rumanvan and Yaugandharayana, sons of his own ministers. In due course, Sahasranika retired with his wife, Mrigavati, to a hermitage in the Himalayas, following the immemorial custom of the Aryas,[1] after crowning Udayana King.

Udayana at first applied himself to his royal duties, and ruled his subjects well. But, gradually, he began to entrust the government to his ministers, and spend almost his whole time in hunting wild elephants, captivating them with the enchanting music of Ghoshavati. He was merry and care-free, and had only one anxiety. He kept on thinking "Nowhere is a wife found equal to me in birth and appearance. Only Vasavadatta is a fit mate for me She likes me, too, by what I hear. But, how is she to be obtained?"

The then King of Avanti was a powerful monarch whom all the neighbouring kings obeyed, except Udayana.

1 The Aryans.

He had his capital as Ujjaini, and had a mighty army which had secured for him his title, Mahasena. He was also called *chanda* Mahasena or the Terrible Mahasena. By doing severe penance in honour of the Ujjaini Mahakali,[1] he received from that goddess a divine sword which made him invincible by enemies. He married a Daitya[2] maiden, and had, by her, two sons, Gopala and Palaka. One day, he gave a splendid banquet to Indra, the Lord of the Devas.[3] In return, Indra gave him a boon that he would have a daughter of matchless beauty and virtue. In due course, this girl was born, and was named Vasavadatta or "Indra's gift."

When Vasavadatta attained marriageable age, Mahasena thought to himself :— "There is no fit husband in the world for my daughter except Udayana, and he has ever been my enemy. How can I make him my son-in-law and submissive ally? He wanders about alone in the forest, capturing wild elephants with his lute. I shall take advantage of this failing of his, and entrap him and bring him here by a stategem. Then, I shall pretend to make my daughter his pupil in music, an art in which he is an adept. He will, doubtless, fall a victim to her charms, the moment he sees her, and he will surely become my son-in-law and obedient ally."

In spite of this decision, he resolved to try negotiations at first, before stooping to a trick. He sent an

1 The wife of Mahakala, or Lord of Time, Siva.

2 A kind of powerful demons, noted for the bravery of their men and the beauty of their women.

3 The shining ones, the gods.

ambassador to Udayana with the message " My daughter wants to become your pupil in music. If you love us, come here and teach her." The proud Udayana, following the Kshatriya custom of one king never obeying another's call, sent a reply "If your daughter desires to become my pupil, send her here. ", which, of course, was an insult to Mahasena. Udayana also told his ministers "I shall go and bring Mahasena here in chains for his impudence in asking me to go, as a music teacher, to his city.' Yaugandharayana told him that Mahasena was a mighty monarch who could not be subdued by him, and that his object was neither proper nor feasible. He added that Mahasena could not be conquered by Udayana because of his great army, and the difficult country through which Avanti had to be reached.

Mahasena's messenger went back with the reply of Udayana, and Mahasena found that strategem alone would succeed. So, he made a large artificial elephant, like his own elephant, Nalagiri, filled it with trained warriors, and placed it in an elephant forest in the Vindhyas.

## PART II.

*(The events covered by "Yaugandharayana's Vows.")*

Udayana's scouts discovered this elephant from a distance, returned to their master, and informed him "We have seen a single elephant roaming in the Vindhya forest. Nowhere in the world is its equal to be found." The king spent that night thinking "If I obtain that mighty elephant, a match for Mahasena's elephant, Nalagiri,

surely, Mahasena will come into my power, and will offer me his daughter, Vasavadatta, in marriage." So, in the morning, he started for the Vindhya forest, disregarding the advice of his ministers, and the prediction of the astrologers that the position of the heavenly bodies at the moment of his departure portended the acquisition of a maiden together with imprisonment.

When he reached the Vindhya forest, he made his troops halt at a distance, and, accompanied by scouts only, entered the elephant forest with his melodious lute, Ghoshavati. On the southern slope of the Vindhya range, he saw the false elephant, looking a real one. It was pointed out to him by his scouts from a distance. He silently approached it, alone, playing on his lute, thinking how he should bind it and singing melodious tunes.

As his mind was concentrated on his music, and the shades of the evening were falling, he did not see that the supposed wild elephant was an artificial one. When he neared it, a body of soldiers in full armour suddenly issued from the elephant, and surrounded him. The king drew his hunting knife, and fought fiercely. But, while he was fighting with those in front of him, he was seized by those from behind. Those troops then carreid him to Ujjaini.

Mahasena himself met his captive with the utmost respect, and entered the city of Ujjaini with him. Shortly thereafter, he made over his daughter, Vasavadatta, to him, and said to him "Prince, teach this lady music. In this way, you will obtain a happy issue to your adventure. Do not grieve."

When he saw Vasavadatta, Udayana's mind was so steeped in love that he forgot his anger and grief. He dwelt in the concert hall in Mahasena's palace, in the inner apartments, teaching Vasavadatta to play and with his eyes constantly fixed on hers.

Meanwhile, the men who had accompanied Udayana to the forest returned to Kausambi. The calm and resolute Yaugandharayana made Rumanvan take charge of the Government of the country, and went to Ujjaini accompanied by Vasantaka. On the way, Yaugandharayana, by a magic charm, altered his own shape. He became deformed, hunch-backed and old, and looked like a madman. By means of that very charm, he gave Vasantaka a body with outstanding veins, protruding belly, ugly mouth and projecting teeth.

Yaugandharayana entered Ujjaini, singing and dancing, and made his way to the king's palace followed by a crowd. Vasavadatta heard him, and sent a maid to take him to the music hall. There, he made a secret sign to Udayana, who at once recognized him as Yaudandharayana, and sent Vasavadatta out of the room on some pretext, and had a long and undisturbed talk with his minister. Yaugandharayana then communicated to the king spells for breaking the chains, and charms for winning Vasavadatta's love. Then, he went out. When Vasavadatta returned, Udayana induced her to summon Vasantaka who was waiting at the door of the palace. Vasantaka amused Vasavadatta by telling her funny stories, and secured her confidene.

As time went on, Vasavadatta felt a great affection for Udayana, and began to take sides with him against her own father. Yaugandharayana went to the palace again, and saw Udayana, making himself invisible to all others there. Then, he, told Udayana, in the presence of only Vasantaka, "King, you were made captive by Mahasena by means of a trick. He now wishes to give you his daughter in marriage and set you at liberty, treating you with all honour. Let us carry away his daughter, and escape before this marriage. In this way, we shall revenge ourselves upon this haughty monarch, by putting him to disgrace. He has given Vasavadatta a female elephant called Bhadravati. No elephant except Nalagiri is able to excel her in speed. The driver of this elephant is a man of this place, called Ashadaka, and I have won him over to our side by giving him much wealth. You must mount that elephant with Vasavadatta, fully armed, and start from this place secretly by night." Udayana remembered carefully all these instructions, and, when Vasavadatta came, told her what Yaugandharayana had told him. She agreed to the proposal, and resolved to elope with him. They made good their escape from Ujjaini, having successfully overcome the obstacles on the way, and arrived safely at Kaušambi.

## PART III.

*(Events between "Yaugandharayana's Vows" and the "Vision of Vasavadatta.")*

Shortly thereafter, Mahasena and his queen sent Gopalaka with their good wishes to Udayana. Udayana

then celebrated his marriage with Vasavadatta, and considered himself the luckiest of men. But, in course of time, he became faithless to Vasavadatta, and renewed his intrigues with a lady-in-waiting, called Virachita, with whom he had an affair before. One day, by a slip of the tongue, he addressed Vasavadatta as "darling Virachita." Thereupon, she became infuriated, and he had to make his peace with her by falling at her feet, and promising to leave off his connection with Virachita, who was then forgiven by the queen at his instance.

As the years rolled on, Udayana neglected the Government of his country, and gave himself up to his own pleasures, mostly hunting. Yaugandharayana was sad at this, as he considered that it was the duty of the ministers to make Udayana the Emperor of the World, the ambition of every Kshatriya King. So, he called the other ministers, and told them that they must do their king a good turn by getting for him, despite him, the Empire of the Earth. He added that the only obstacle to this was the King of Magadha, who was a foe in the rear, and was always attacking from behind, and who should be won over by Udayana's marrying his daughter, Padmavati. He said to them "I have already requested him to give his daughter in marriage to our King. He replied 'I will not give my daughter, whom I love more than myself, to Udayana, as he is passionately attached to his wife, Vasavadatta. So, we must conceal Vasavadatta somewhere, set fire to her house, and proclaim everywhere that the queen is dead. In no other case will the King of Magadha give his daughter to our Sovereign, or our King

marry another. But, if this is done, everything will go as we have planned." The other ministers were eventually won over to this plan, even Gopalaka being let into the secret and agreeing to it. The ministers then arranged for a grand hunt for Udayana in the Lavanaka district bordering Magadha, and resolved to burn Vasavadatta's apartments, and to have Vasavadatta taken and entrusted to Padmavati, so that the future Queen of Udayana might be a witness to Vasavadatta's virtuous conduct when in concealment.

## PART IV.

*(The events covered by "The Vision of Vasavadatta.")*

Yaugandharayana and the other ministers accompanied Udayana and Vasavadatta to Lavanaka. One day, when the King had gone for his hunt, Yaugandharayana arranged everything. Then he Gopalaka, Rumanvan and Vasantaka went secrectly to Vasavadatta, and, by appealing to her love for her lord and his glory, persuaded her to agree to their plan. Then, Yaugandharayana made her, by his magic charm, assume the appearance of a Brahmin woman and made Vasantaka look like a Brahmin boy, and himself look like an aged Brahmin. Then, he took Vasavadatta, under the name of Avantika,[1] and Vasantaka, and proceeded to Rajagriha. Thereafter, Rumanvan burnt Vasavadatta's quarters with fire, and exclaimed aloud "Woe unto me! The queen and Vasantaka are burnt to death!"

Yaugandharayana and Avantika reached Rajagriha. They saw Princess Padmavati in her garden and went

1 Lady of Avanti.

towards her, but the guards tried to prevent them. Padmavati fell in love with Avantika, the moment she saw her, and ordered the guards to allow her party to approach her. Under the pretext that Avantika was his daughter, and had been deserted by her husband, Yaugandharayana left her in the care of Padmavati, and returned to Lavanaka. Then, Padmavati took with her Lady Avantika and Vasantaka, and entered her splendid palace. She soon perceived that Lady Avantika was a person of very high rank, and, suspecting her to be some exalted personage in concealment, entertained her with luxurious comforts to her heart's content.

When Udayana returned to Lavanaka, and saw Vasavadatta's apartments reduced to ashes, and heard from Rumanvan that the queen was burnt with Vasantaka, he rolled on the ground, and became unconscious. But, on seeing the behaviour of Yaugandharayana and Gopalaka, and on remembering the predictions of the astrologers, he suspected that the Queen might possibly be alive, and lived in the hope of being some day reunited with her.

The spies of the King of Magadha, who were at Lavanaka, went to their King, and told him everything about the fire and the death of Vasavadatta, just as Yaugandharayana had intended them to do. On hearing their reports, the King of Magadha was anxious to give his daughter in marriage to Udayana, and invited him to Rajagriha, and offered him her hand. On the advice of Yaugandharayana, Udayana accepted the offer, and was married to Padmavati with great pomp and ceremony.

Yaugandharayana made the king of Magadha, on the happy marriage occasion, swear, by the God of Fire, never to injure Udayana. Vasavadatta remained unobserved in the palace, praying for the glory of her lord. Yaugandharayana was afraid that Udayana would see Vasavadatta, if he remained there, and prevailed upon him to leave the palace along with Padmavati and the army, immediately after the marriage.

Vasavadatta went secretly in the rear of the army making Vasantaka precede her. Udayana reached Lavanaka, and entered his own palace with Padmavati, but was thinking all the time of Vasavadatta. Vasavadatta went to the house of Gopalaka that night, and embraced him, and wept over her fate. Yaugandharayana and Rumanvan went there and consoled her.

Padmavati's servants went and told her, "Oh Queen, Lady Avantika has arrived here, and has gone to the house of Gopalaka." When Padmavati heard this, she was agitated and alarmed, and, in the presence of Udayana, said to them "Go and tell Avantika that the Queen says 'You are a deposit in my hands. What business have you where you are? Come to me!" The king approached close to Padmavati, on seeing her agitation, and was surprised to see her unfaded garlands and ever-distinct forehead mark. He asked her who was responsible for these. She said "It is all due to Lady Avantika, who has been entrusted to me by a Brahman."

No sooner did the King hear all this, than he set off for the house of Gopalaka, thinking that Lady Avantika

would be none other than Vasavadatta. When he entered Gopalaka's house, he saw there Vasavadatta, Yaugandharayana, Rumanvan and Vasantaka in addition to Gopalaka. Udayana and Vasavadatta embraced each other, weeping over one another. Even Yaugandharayana's face was suffused with tears at this tender scene of the re-joining of the two lovers after their separation.

Padmavati, who then found out the truth about Vasavadatta, also burst into tears. Vasavadatta wept as if her heart would break, and exclaimed, with tears, "What use is there in my going on living and causing only sorrow to my husband?" Yaugandharayana then told Udayana "O King! I have done all this in order to make you the Emperor of the world, by marrying to you the daughter of the Sovereign of Magadha. Queen Vasavadatta is not in the slightest degree responsible for this trick. Queen Padmavati is witness to her virtuous conduct."

Then Padmavati, whose mind was free from the least trace of jealousy, said "I am ready to enter the fire[1] on the spot to prove her innocence and virtue." Vasavadatta also said "I must enter the fire, to clear the mind of the King[2] from suspicion". Then Yaugandharayana rinsed his mouth, and spoke as follows: "If I have been a benefactor to my King, and if the Queen is free from sin, speak, ye guardians of the world! Else, I shall die at once." Then, a heavenly voice was heard "Happy art

1 A favourite ordeal with the Aryans, the most famous instance being Sita's entering the fire to prove her purity.

2 Of course, his polygamy and unfaithfulness did not diminish his jealousy.

thou, O King, in having Yaugandharayana for minister, and Vasavadatta, who was a goddess in her former birth, as wife. Not the slightest blame attaches to her." Udayana and Gopalaka embraced Yaughandharayana for his resolute appeal to the guardians of the world, and Udayana considered that the whole earth was already subject to him. Thereafter, he lived a life of happiness and felicity, with his two wives whose affection for him was daily increasing.

## CHANGES MADE BY BHASA.

Bhasa has obviously made many changes from the folklore version. Almost all of them add to the beauty and dramatic effect of the story.

### IN "YAUGANDHARAYANA'S VOWS"

The main changes made in "Yaugandharayana's Vows" are the following. In the folklore version, Udayana is very anxious to marry Vasavadatta long before he sees her, and she is also represented as having fallen in love with him, an imitation of the story of Nala and Damayanti. Bhasa has, with true artistic instinct, changed this into a love at first sight, generated in Udayana at his seeing Vasavadatta without a veil, when the palanquin-bearers were changing shoulders. The exchange of pompous and taunting messages between Mahasena and Udayana regarding Vasavadatta's tuition in the lute by Udayana is omitted, and the engagement of Udayana as tutor is only hinted at in *Swapnavasavadatta* in Angaravati's message and by some beautiful verses about the tuition itself.

In the drama, Uda ana sees Vasavadatta for the first time by accident, as stated above, and not when already appointed her music teacher with the clumsy words plainly hinting about his intended marriage with her. So, the element of romance is enhanced.

A series of changes has been made about the elephant episode. Instead of his own scouts informing Udayana about the false elephant, as in the folklore, a single foot-soldier (evidently a spy of Mahasena) informs him about it. A herd of real elephants is introduced to give verisimilitude to the artificial elephant. Udayana fights Mahasena's troops on his horse, Sundarapatala, and armed with a spear, instead of on foot and armed with a hunting knife. Twenty nobles of his also accompany him and fight and fall down dead. The king is then bound with creepers and twigs, and is not caught from behind when fighting his enemies in front, as in the folklore. The interesting accounts of the soldiers who bewailed the loss of their relatives, and of the single solider who caught Udayana by his hair and sought to chop off his head, but slipped in the pools of blood helplessly and of Salankayana who had been wounded earlier, but recovered consciousness at the critical moment and prevented further violence on Udayana are not found in the folklore version, and are Bhasa's own creation.

No personal message is sent to Yaugandharayana in the fofklore by Udayana, through Hamsaka, as here, and no vows to release Udayana are taken by Yaugandharayana. Yaugandharayana, in the folklore, describes Mahasena's

army as powerful, and not as contemptible as in Act I, verse 4. The interesting passages about the auspicious cord and the Queen-Mother's message to Yaugandharayana are not to be found in the folklore. The undramatic passage in the folklore, that, just before Udayana started for the elephant forest, astrologers predicted that the position of the heavens indicated the acquisition of a bride along with imprisonment is omitted in the Play, as detrimental to the feeling of surprise which ought to be there. So too, in the play, Mahasena does not receive the prisoner Udayana and take him to the city with princely honours.

Yaugandharayana is, in the folklore, a great magic-worker possessing a charm by virtue of which he changes his own shape as well as Vasantaka's, becomes invisible, etc. In the Play, he changes his form by putting on clothes left behind by Dwaipayana, and not by any charm of his own. He is not said to have changed the form of Vasantaka. Rumanvan also goes to Ujjaini in the Play, and is not left behind at Kausambi as in the folklore. Vasavadatta does not invite Yaugandharayana to the palace, as in the the folklore, and Yaugandharayana does not have a long talk with Udayana, and tell him about all his scheme and designs, and teach Udayana charms by which to break chains, win Vasavadatta's love, etc. Nor does Yaugandharayana visit Udayana again and become invisible to all except him and Vasantaka, and suggest the taking away of Vasavadatta to bring disgrace on Mahasena. Far more naturally, the three ministers conspire secretly in an out-of-the-way temple, when people do not move about in the vicinity, in various disguises, and go away by different

doors when people begin to move about. Vasantaka alone meets the king and acts as intermediary between the king and Yaugandharayana and Rumanvan. And it is Udayana who suggests the taking away of Vasavadatta to bring disgrace on Mahasena, a plea not accepted by Yaugandharayana who is put out at it. In the folklore, the escape of Udayana is accomplished without a fight by Yaugandharayana to cover it, as in the Play. The folklore version makes Mahasena and his Queens send Gopalaka to Kausambi to convey to Udayana their good wishes, and makes Udayana celebrate the marriage there. The passage-at-arms between Yaugandharayana and Bharatarohaka, the attempted suicide of Angaravati, the touching episode about the gift of a golden chalice to Yaugandharayana, and the marriage of the paintings of Vasavadatta and Udayana are all Bhasa's own creation.

## IN SVAPNAVASAVADATTA.

In *Svapnavasavadatta*, too, Bhasa has made equally great changes from the folklore story. Thus, in the folklore story, Yaugandharayana intends to make Udayana the Emperor of the World, despite himself, and it is for this purpose that he suggests the mythical destruction of Vasavadatta by fire, and brings about the marriage of Udayana with Padmavati. Though it was an Aryan ideal for ministers to make their monarchs conquer the whole world and perform the *Rajasuya* sacrifice, still, it is obvious that most of the audience would not approve of such acts by Yaugandharayana for such a purpose. Bhasa, with his profound knowledge of human nature, gave a

twist to that story, and made Yaugandharayana do these horrible acts, causing infinite suffering and sorrow to Udayana and Vasavadatta, not for the sake of making Udayana the Emperor of the World, but, as he said, simply for saving Kausambi and the Vatsa country from the foul usurper, Aruni. It is obvious that most men would condemn Yaugandharayana much less for his doing these acts from such a motive than from the motive given in the folklore.

Again, the folklore story makes Gopalaka, the brother of Vasavadatta, also participate in these acts with the object of making Udayana the Emperor of the world. This involves a double absurdity; firstly, it makes him a party to the supersession of his own sister by another woman; and secondly, it makes him, described as an adept in politics by his father, agree to Udayana's becoming the Emperor of the World, after conquering his own father and kingdom. This absurdity has been obviated by the dramatist by omitting Gopalaka's name altogether from this plot.

In the folklore story, it is Vasantaka who is said to have been burnt along with Vasavadatta, and Yaugandharayana merely goes to Rajagriha with Vasantaka and Vasavadatta, and returns to Lavanaka, even before Udayana returns from the hunt, after entrusting Vasavadatta to Padmavati. This involves an absurdity. It is impossible that the king would return from his hunt only after Yaugandharayana returns from his expedition to Magadha. So, Bhasa has made Yaugandharayana the man

who is said to have been burnt along with Vasavadatta, and has made Yaugandharayana rejoin the king only at the very end, when he claims Avantika back.

In the folk-lore story, the king suspected, from the behaviour of Yaugandharayana and Gopalaka, and also from remembering certain predictions of astrologers, that Queen Vasavadatta was really not dead, and lived in the hope of being re-united with her. This takes away much of the romantic force of the story, and Bhasa has omitted it, and put, in its stead, a half-formed suspicion of the king, that Vasavadatta was still alive, from seeing on Padmavati's face the unfading *tilak* mark. The folk-lore story would make Udayana's laments about Vasavadatta mere maudlin sentiment, and his marriage with Padmavati an act of the usual polygamist. The keen anguish and strong love, seen in Udayana's lament for Vasavadatta, would not have their effect, if the king is known to have really believed all the time that she was alive, and that he would be re-united with her. The fascinating dream scene in the Ocean Pavilion would also lose more than half its charm and force. The "Vision of Vasavadatta" would have become merely the "Sight of Vasavadatta."

The dream scene, the best thing in the "Vision of Vasavadatta," and the thing which has given the name to the play, is not in the folk-lore. Indeed, in the folk-lore, Yaugandharayana makes Vatsa Raja leave Rajagriha, as soon as the marriage is over, from fear that the king might discover Vasavadatta in the palace, and that the whole plot would be frustrated.

Many delicate touches in the Play, like Vasavadatta's making the bridal garland for Padmavati, her indignant exclamation "Oh, what an outrage! Even my noble lord now belongs to another woman" are not found in the folk-lore story.

The folk-lore story, by making Padmavati fall in love with Vasavadatta at first sight, when she was taken to the palace grounds along with Vasantaka by Yaughandharayana, takes away the charming scene in the hermitage with its vivid description, and the beautiful episode of Padmavati's piety and desire to make gifts to holy men, and accepting Vasavadatta merely as a deposit at the request of a holy man. So, too, it takes away Padmavati's graciousness and genial hospitality, and kindly treatment of all around her, by stating that she suspected Vasavadatta to be an exalted personage, and gave her all the luxuries she wanted. Again, the folk-lore story makes Vasantaka live along with Vasavadatta, instead of Vasavadatta living alone in the Magadhan palace and moving freely with the maids and Padmavati.

In the folk-lore, Yaugandharayana makes the king of Magadha swear by the god of fire, at the time of Padmavati's marriage, never to injure Udayana, a most awkward and undramatic thing to do. Incidentally that takes away also the spontaneity of the Magadhan King's help to Udayana, and would make his message and verse 12 of Act V lose much of their friendliness and grace.

In the drama, Vasavadatta follows Padmavati to her husband's home in Kausambi, and the events there lead

'naturally and convincingly to the revelation of Vasavadatta's true identity. In the folk-lore story, Vasavadatta separates from Padmavati, and goes, in the rear of the army, to Gopalaka's house in Lavanaka, and embraces Gopalaka and weeps, and Padmavati gets an inkling of this, and indignantly asks Vasavadatta her deposit, to return to her, and, then, Vatsaraja sees the unfading *tilak* mark on Padmavati's forehead, in her agitation, suspects Avantika to be Vasavadatta, rushes to Gopalaka's house, where he meets Vasavadatta and identifies her. There is much weeping, and the usual conventional offers of Vasavadatta and Padmavati to jump into the fire, and the conventional appeal of Yaugandharayana to the heavens to declare Vasavadatta to be pure and chaste, and the consequent declaration by the heavenly voice. All this third-rate imitation of famous stories, like those of Sita, Bhasa found to be highly undramatic, encumbrances. So, he threw them overboard. It is obvious that, if he had followed the folk-lore story Padmavati would have committed a breach of her promise to Yaugandharayana to keep Vasavadatta as a deposit always with her; Vasavadatta would have behaved in a manner unworthy of her essential nature; and the object of Yaugandharayana in entrusting Vasavadatta to Padmavati, making the latter bear witness to her virtue, would become a worthless addition, as offers to jump into the fire, and a heavenly voice, were required to convince Vatsaraja of Vasavadatta's chastity.

It is also added, somewhat naively, in the folk-lore story, that Vatsaraja though he never conquered any

earth except his own realm, felt as if he had, whole world. Bhasa, who lived in the days Chandragupta, ruling over a kingdom a the size of the Vatsa country, threw this naive illusion of world monarchy overboard. When he threw that motive for Yaugandharayana's act overboard he had naturally to invent Aruni and his foul usurpation of the Vatsa country. Bhasa is also responsible for the touching scene in the palace gardens; the equally touching episode about the recovery of Ghoshavati and Vatsaraja's getting it mended and mourning over it; the arrival of the chamberlain and nurse from Ujjaini at the critical moment with the paintings of the two lovers married in effigy, and other beautiful things.

PLAYS IN IMITATION OF THESE.

These two plays were so popular that many plays were written in imitation of them. Thus, the *Vcena Vasavadatta* and the *Unmathavasavadatta* are imitations of *Pratijna Yaugandharayana*, and *Priyadarsika*, *Ratnavali*, and evên *Malavikagnimitra*, are imitations of *Swapna, vasavadatta*. In Ratnavali, the secret loves of Udayana and Sagarika, an attendant on queen Vasavadatta, are described. There is a conflagration, and finally, Udayana marries Sagarika also. It is obvious that Sagarika represents Avantika in the Ocean Pavilion. In *Priyadarsika*, too, Udayana makes love to Aranyaka, a maid-servant of his queen, and his intrigues are dicovered. Finally, the Queen herself presents Aranyaka, who is discovered to be the daughter of the king of Anga, to Udayana as

second wife. Needless to say, Aranyaka is a combination of Virachika and Avantika. In *Malavikagnimitra*, Agnimitra makes secret love to an attendant of his queen, called Malavika, who is kept jealously out of the king's sight on account of her great beauty. Finally, he marries Malavika, who turns out to be a Princess. The resemblance of Malavika to Avantika need not be emphasised. The very word Malava means also Avanti the Avanti of Bhasa's days having become the Malava of Kalidasa's.

## FIVE VERSES RESTORED.

After careful consideration, I have put in five of the genuine Bhasa verses, omitted from "The Vision of Vasavadtata", into their proper places. The first is verse 2-a in Act IV. This has been attributed to Bhasa by Ramachandra and Gunachandra, and is expressly said to be extracted from *Bhasa's Swapnavasavadatta*. I have also the high authority of Dr. Sukthankar for this inse·tion. Needless to say, I agree with his arguments. It is natural for the king to reinforce the Jester's conclusion by his own observation. The verse itself has been accepted by most critics as a genuine verse of Bhasa.

The next is verse 4-a in Act IV. This verse is very beautiful, and is a description of an ideal Hindu wife. This is ascribed to Bhasa by the *Subhashitavali*. Though Mr. Pusalker wants to put this verse in the Fifth Act, before the famous dream scene, or in the lamentations of the king in Act VI, after Vasavadatta's nurse comes to him with a message from Angaravati, I am satisfied that its

proper place is where I have put it. The very next speech after where I have put it, that of Vasavadatta when she says, "Well, well, I am now amply rewarded for all my sufferings. Even this disguise has many merits' probabilises it. Above all, Padmavati's speech in answer to the maid's remark "Princess, really, my lord lacks all courtesy", to the effect "Not at all, my dear. My lord has shown great courtesy in remembering, even now, all the merits of the noble Vasavadatta", shows that the king must have recounted a number of mer ts, as in verse 4-a, and not merely made the general remarks in verse 4.

The next is verse 7-a in Act *V*, which is attributed to *Swapnavasavadatta* by Abhinavagupta, who quotes it as an instance where the poet's love for figurative language prevails over his regard for the deep emotion which would make such language improbable. This remark applies, of course, to this context, as the king, while telling the Jester that his dead queen is alive, speaks not about his great surprise or joy at her resuscitation, as he should have in the great emotional storm, but of her storming his eye-lids with her beauty, and entering his heart, thus going back to the days when he fell in love with her at first sight, curiously enough a reason given by some scholars for rejecting this verse, forgetting Abhinavagupta's pertinent comments.

The next is verse 8-a in Act V. This verse occurs in Saradatanaya's '*Bhava Prakasa*' when discussing in detail the entire-plot of a Svapnanataka. The other details given there agree with the details in our *Svapna*, and there is no doubt whatever that Dr. Ganapathi Sastri is right in putting this verse after verse 8 in Act V.

The last is verse 17-a in Act VI. This verse is quoted by Dandin in his *Kavyadarsa* (II. 280) without mentioning the work or the author. I agree with Mr. Pusalker that it is from this play, and ought to be put in here.

## Characters in these two Plays.

### *Udayana (Vatsaraja).*

In Udayana, Bhasa has created a delightful character combining in himself the roles of King Arthur, Don Juan and Prince Charming. No doubt, this character has been taken over from the folk-lore which, however, emphasizes more the Don Juan aspect of the king, making him not only the darling of all women and an adept in the fine arts, but also a philanderer who forgets one fair woman the moment he sees another. The folk-lore had, even before Bhasa, made Udayana call Vasavadatta "Virachika", a secret flame of his, in a fit of absent-mindedness, and come to trouble, a theme which has been worn threadbare by many a Western novelist. Bhasa has emphasised the king's chivalrous and generous instincts more than his frivolous tendencies. In short, he has concentrated on the king Arthur and prince Charming element, and toned down the Don Juan element, though, of course, the Virachika episode was too delicious to be dropped, and so, he hinted at it in the "Vision of Vasavadatta."

The picture presented by the king in these two plays is wholly delightful. He is not consciously polygamous, marrying another woman in cold blood when he has al-

ready one mate. Indeed, the poet emphasises that Vasavadatta had to be burnt to death before Udayana would consent to marry even the beautiful Padmavati, the daughter of the leading monarch of the age. In dealing with this subject, we have to remember the failings of those times. Sanskrit dramatists have always called kings "many-wived", and even Dushyanta, the hero of the Sakuntala, had many wives when he made love to, and married, Sakuntala. Indeed, Sage Kanva asks Sakuntala to be on good terms with her co-wives, a sentiment jarring on modern ears, and marring the beauty of the play. I may add that, in other countries, even worse conditions prevailed in those days. Solomon "the Wise" had hundreds of wives, let alone concubines, though he ruled a country less in extent than Vatsa, and there is not a word in the Bible (Old Testament or New Testament) condemning his polygamous and other tendencies. Without any theoretical objection to polygamy, Bhasa, profound psychlogist that he was, felt that something would be lacking in the romantic attachment of Udayana for Vasavadatta, if he married Padmavati while knowing Vasavadatta to be alive.

Udayana in Bhasa is primarily the romantic lover of Vasavadatta, though he is also the chivalrous and obliging husband of Padmavati. His poignant sorrow, on the supposed death of Vasavadatta, so vividly described by the student in Act I of the "Vision of Vasavadatta", and in the moving verses 1, 4, 4, (a) 5 and 6 in Act IV; 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 7 (a), 8, 8 (a), 9, 10, and 11 in Act V; and 1, 2, 3, 4.

11, 13, 14 and 17 of Act VI of the same play, shows this. Verily, as the student says,

"Blessed is a woman loved with affection so sincere;
She lives in her lord's love for e' r though burnt and departed".

The description of Udayana as rolling on the ground in grief, rising up suddenly and calling out in agony "O Vasavadatta, oh daughter of Avanti's King, oh my heart's beloved, O dearest pupil' will haunt us long after we have finished the play, and we too will say, with Udayana.

Can one forget a love which shook the heart?
Fond memory brings it back with a start;
Our sad and mortgaged minds get free, one fears,
Only by paying in full the debt of tears "

Such was his love for Vasavadatta that on her supposed death he neglected even his lute Ghoshavati which was abandoned on Narmada banks.

Udayana's famous comparison between Vasavadatta and Padmavathi, in verse 4 of act IV of "The vision of Vasavadatta", is true for all time. There are some who hold the heart, for no obvious reason, and some who merely extort an intellectual appreciation. Verse 4 (a) in Act IV is exquisite, in its wonderful description of the ideal Hindu wife, who is flattered at the idea of being a servant to her husband, be she princess or peasant woman.

But, there is a peculiar chivalry and delicacy in Udayana with regard to Padmavati which would do him honour. Verse 8 in Act IV of "The Vision of Vasavadatta"

shows this. His white lie, in verse 7, that the pollen of the *Kasa* flowers is responsible for his tears, had also its origin in consideration for Padmavati's feelings.

But, Udayana was not merely a ladie's man. He could fight, and fight like a Kshatriya warrior, the bravest of the brave. When caught in the trap of the artificial elephant, he did not try to back out, but rushed into the serried ranks of the enemy, and fought till he fell down exhausted. Even when fallen, such was the dread of his innumerable foes, for this one man, that they scattered away the moment he recovered consciousness. Verses 13 in Act V of "The Vision of Vasavadatta" too shows this. His going to catch the tusker attended only by a few infantrymen is also proof of his bravery. When the jester asks him not to go in to the Ocean Pavilion because a cobra is there, the king, with a quiet smile, rushes to the spot, examines the object, finds it to be a wreath waving in the wind, and chaffs the jester about it. None but a brave man would rush so rapidly towards what might have been an Indian cobra, between which and death there is only a razor's edge.

The next quality in him is his passion for sportsmanship and hunting and adventure in general. It was his delight to go alone and capture wild tuskers, of noted strength and prowess. It was not drugged tigers or tamed elephants, posing as wild, that he hunted and captured. He plunged into the densest forests of the Vindhyas to meet the wildest of elephants and lions, and instisted on going alone. This, of course, requires a brave, strong, skill-

ed man, with infinite resource and endurance, for there is no reason to believe that, in the Vindhyan jungles, delicious eatables and drinks were more common then than now.

He was very loving and considerate towards all including his subordinates and servants, and generous in praise of them. Thus, the magnificient words he utters in verse 18, Act VI of "The Vision of Vasavadatta", regarding Yaugandharayana, must have compensated that individual for all his trouble. His compelling Padmavati to sit by his side, when receiving the messengers from Ujjaini, despite her reluctance, also shows this. His love for Vasavadatta need not be emphasised, as we have said enough about it. His love for King Mahasena and Queen Angaravati, seen in verses 6, 8 and 9 of Act VI of "The Vision of Vasavadatta" also shows this. When he hears of Rumanvan's knowing about the plot, he passes it off with a joke "What a rogue Rumanvan is!" The twenty men taken by him to tackle the false elephant perished to a man except Hamsaka. It is significant that he appealed to them not as an unimaginative captain does to his men, but as man to man, calling them by their names, family names etc.

He had a great regard for the law of the Aryas, and never broke them. Thus, he never looked at Avantika till she was proved to be Vasavadatta, despite his strong grounds for suspecting her to be so.

He was, like all Aryan Kings, a patron of the Vedas, the glorious heritage of India. He made Lavanaka a

centre of Vedic learning, to which even students of other countries flocked, owing to the excellence of the training there. The reputation of a small state, Pudukottai, for Sanskrit contests must prevent incredulity in this claim for Vatsa.

He was, like all really great men, a lover of the fine arts. Like Emperor Samudragupta, who loved to depict himself in his coins as playing on the Veena, Vatsaraja was an expert at playing on the Veena. Like Tansen, who could move wild animals with his songs not to speak of Krishna moving the cows when he played on his flute, Vatsaraja could tame wild elephants with his lute. It will be rash to disbelieve such possibilities, and to believe only that death rays can kill, poison gas exterminate, and bombs smash. His fondness for his lute was only slightly less than his fondness for Vasavadatta. This is shown vividly by verses 1, 2 and 3 of Act VI of "The Vision of Vasavadatta". The moment he saw the strings broken, he had the lute sent to a master craftsman for repair. His lute meant as much to Vatsaraja, in his grief, as the piano meant to Beethoven in his deafness. Great artists love their instruments as much as great philosophers love their thoughts, and great soldiers love their victories.

Vatsaraja is a human being, not a doll or puppet like so many princes. His talk with the jester is natural, that of one human being to another, and has none of that studio atmosphere, so common in the talks of princes. It is obvious that he is speaking his own words, and not another's put into his mouth. He has stories told him by

his jester, and has often to correct the story-teller's version about cities and kings.

He is a lover of flowers and natural beauty. He has a tenderness, like a true lover, for everything living. The extraondinarily tender verse 3 of Act IV, bubbling with feeling for lovers even among the bees, shows this. He sheds *real* tears when he thinks of Vasavadatta, not *stage* tears.

He is also well up in psychology. He analyses the nature of Vasavadatta and Padmavati well. He threatens the jester with force in order to make him say which of the two he prefers, but soon he realises that method will not do, and begs of him to speak from mere friendship. His words about its being easy to find men of great virtue and courtesy in the world, but difficult to find those who appreciate such men, ring true for all time. His deduction in verse (2) (a) of Act IV, that Padmavati had only just left the stone seat in the *sephalika* bower, by the warmth on the seat, and his inierence in verses 4 of Act V, that Padmavati had never been to the Ocean Pavilion, owing to the bed being unruffled and the pillow not crushed, the quilt being undisturbed, the headache medicines not having left their stains, and nothing being placed to divert the patient's eye, and the improbability of a sick person's leaving the bed so soon, also show this.

He is a man who not only loves, but is loved in turn. His mother is anxious to get him back. Yaugandharayana, Rumanvan and the jester did acts of unthinkable heroism in order to rescue him from captivity. Vasavadatta, from

love for him and his welfare, made the supreme sacrifice that woman can make, and allowed her lord to become another woman's husband. Padmavati, too, loved him, and freely forgave him his sentiments of preference for Vasavadatta. Even a causal person in the palace easily offered him the lute he had got. Mahasena, who was at first fiercely inimical to him, soon had his enmity extinguished on hearing about his bravery and other qualities. The very jailor, Sivaka, allowed him to go outside the jail, a liberty not allowed by the rules, but exercised by jailors from those days till now.

("The whole world loves a lover" runs a Western proverb, and Udayana is an apt illustration of it.) Despite his neglect of Governmental duties, excessive love of sport, and disregard of sound counsel, Udayana has remained a favourite with the Indians, and, will, I am sure, be a favourite with all. Such is the magic of his name that many plays have been written about him besides these two, some instances being *Ratnavali, Priyadarsika, Vatsa Raja Charita and Unmatha Vasavadatta.* In distant Kerala, the most popular indigenous hero, the hero of a hundred ballads, is named Udayana after this King of Vatsa. Thacholi Thenan, with his warlike feats and amorous conquests, is only the Kerala edition of Udayana of Vatsa with, of course, considerable modifications to suit the local conditions. None but a great character will be complimented like that.

PRADYOTA (MAHASENA)

Pradyota Mahasena is a king of a very different type from Udayana Vatsaraja. He is desirous of pomp and

servility, and glories in the neighbouring kings putting the dust of his horses' hoofs on their coronets and heads, and in his orders being carried out like a forest fire burning everywhere, unlike the genial Udayana. While Udayana is never controlled even by the masterly Yaugandharayana, and has to be tricked into believing in the death of Vasavadatta before he would consent to marry Padmavati, Mahasena is afraid of his prime minister, Bharatarohaka, and probably married all his 16 queens from political motives, at the dictation of his ministers. In Act II of "Yaugandharayana's Vows", he expresses his opinion that Bharatarohaka does not like the kindly treatment of Udayana, and that he must win him over to his view, but, as often happens in such cases, Bharatarohaka wins over the king, and, in Act III we find Udayana once more in chains, a clear proof of Bharatarohaka's point of view prevailing over his master's. This can also be seen in his not allowing Avanti troops to go to the help of Udayana against Aruni who must have had the secret backing, or at least the sympathies, of Bharatarohaka.

There is no doubt, however, that Mahasena is at heart a good and kindly man, judged by the usual standards, He loves his wife; he adores his daughter; he wants to be fair to his enemies; he rushes to Angaravati and prevents her attempt at suicide, by telling her that there is nothing to be ashamed about, as Vasavadatta had been married to Udayana by the Kshatriya system of *Gandharva* marriage. Even the burning of large portions of his city by Yaugandharayana does not stand in his way of performing the marriage of Vasavadatta and Udayana

in effigy, and accepting the *fait accompli*. He has got a high sense of honour. There is no doubt that between Act III and Act IV of "Yaugandharayana's Vows", when Nalagiri was made, by the machinations of Yaugandharayana, to run amok, he released Udayana from his bondage to bring that elephant under control with his lute, Ghoshavati, and thereafter made him also Vasavadatta's tutor in music, as is clear from Queen Angaravati's message sent through the chamberlain and nurse at the end of "The Vision of Vasavadatta". He did not send Udayana once more to prison after this act of service, as many a lesser man might have done. His anxiety to get Udayana treated for his wounds and to restore him to health does him credit. He is fair to his foes. In describing the line of Bharata Kings, his foes, he does not deduct even a tittle from their glorious reputation. His sentiments regarding the selection of a suitable bridegroom are excellent. His further reflection that, even after such careful selection, the fate of each marriage depends largely on Fate is also profoundly true.

He is a man of considerable shrewdness. He would not allow Angaravati to get away by merely stating that the girl should be given where there would be no reason to rue about the choice later on. His remark that Hindu mothers feel small when their grown-up daughters are not given away in marriage, and yet grieve greatly when their marriage and the inevitable separation come, also shows this.

He is the type of the usual run of Indian monarchs, unlike Udayana who represents the ones far above the

average. For him, signifiicantly enough, the lute, Ghosavati, presents no problems, of re-stringing or playing, or represent any emotional association, but presents simply a problem of gifting it away to a suitable person. He labels his first son as an adept in politics, and not interested in music; his second son as an expert in athletics but a foe of aesthetices; he gives the lute to his daughter, Vasavadatta, and, in reply to her mother's statement that the girl would simply get mad over it and play for hours, says, like many an Indian father "Let her play on! It will not be so easy in her father-in law's house". In Udayana, we see only a lover, and not a father; in Mahasena, we see the father emphasised. His relations even towards Angaravati, were not those of a lover, but of a husband and head of the family, she being second in command.

## VASAVADATTA.

Vasavadatta is a memorable character. Her supreme trait is her complete identification with her husband, and readiness to sacrifice her all for him. That is expressed in verse 4 (*a*) of Act IV of "The Vision of Vasavadatta", and represents the ideal Hindu wife, from Sita's days to these. It will be somewhat difficult for Westerners to understand this aspect of her character. Often, what passes for strength in one civilisation is taken for weakness in another. An advocate of non-violence will be honoured in India and despised in Germany. A man fond of wine in moderation will be called a 'good mixer' in Western countries, but, will be roundly labelled a 'drunkard' in this country. A

woman refusing to allow her husband to marry another, for saving a country or even the world, may be considered heroic in Western countries, whereas a woman making this supreme sacrifice may be considered heroic in India. But, largely due to the two World Wars, the world is becoming more and more one unit, and I dare say there will be many now in every country who will understand and appreciate both the above apparently contradictory objects of fame, aud see heroism in both the women. It has been the pride of the Hindu race that just as oxygen and hydrogen, two gases, when mixed, become life-giving water, and do not separate thereafter, except by the machinations of men, so, too, a girl who has been in her father's family till the age of 16, is married to a stranger, on whom she has not set her eyes before, and identifies her lot with his to such an extent that father, mother, brother, sister become but mere names of an ancient and almost forgotte past, and her husband becomes her god, her all. It is only those who lived under this system and derived its full benefit that can appreciate this marvellous thing. As a Hindu husband who has shared in the benefits of the system, I, for one, would certainly say that, whatever the defects of the system abstractly, the complete identifica tion of the wife with the husband is a sublime thing, a debt which the husband can never hope to repay, like the pure benefits of nature, like air or water, So, I am sure that among India's millions, Vasavadatta will be loved as an ideal Hindu wife, even as Udayana paid her the eloquent tribute referred to above.

But, despite this, Vasavadatta is not an automaton, and exhibits her human feelings, as when she exclaims

"Oh, what an outrage! Even my husband has become another's", and carefully avoids putting the leaf "rival-crusher" in the wedding garland, while liberally using the "widowhood-preventer". She is agitated when she hears that Udayana is betrothed to Padmavati, and is calmed only when she learns from Padmavati's nurse that he has not come to Rajagriha for this purpose, but has only been made to agree to it when he is there on another errand. Even then, she feels sad at times, though the sacrifice was agreed to by her. Thus, when, in the famous dream scene, the king asks her whether she is angry, she replies "No, no. Only sad and unhappy". She cannot be blamed for this. Even Christ, who had agreed with God to sacrifice himself for mankind, cried out, when actually crucified, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me in this exigent?". Even God born as a man will have such a substratum of unhappiness. What then of Vasavadatta in the prime of her womanhood, seperated from her darling husband, though with her own consent? Her scornful expression "Shame, even here Virachita!", when Udayana asked her whether she was thinking of Virachika, shows her essentially feminine nature. She is indignant at being asked in the hermitage to move out of the way, and asks Yaugandharayana whether even *she* might be ordered to make way.

She is very intelligent, as when she gives ingenious explanations to cover up her remarks which had almost given herself away. Thus, in Act II of "The Vision of Vasavadatta", she says inadvertently that Udayana is handsome, and, when Padmavati asks her how she knew

that, she gives the clever reply that the people of Ujjaini were remarking so and Padmavati is satisfied, as she considered it natural for the people of Ujjaini to have seen him and remarked thus about one of his outstanding traits. Again, when she heard about the betrothal of Udayana to Padmavati, she exclaimed involuntarily "What an improper thing!" and when asked what she meant, said that she was thinking of how deeply the king was said to have grieved for Vasavadatta, and how soon he had forgotten all that. So, too, she involuntarily blurted out in the *sephalika* bower that Vasavadatta loved Udayana even more than Padmavati did, and, when asked by Padmavati, said that had her love been less, she would not have forsaken her people to elope with an enemy of her father.

She is very considerate to others. Thus, when Padmavati offers, for her sake, to go away from the *sephalika* garden, even though her husband is in tears, a few yards from her, she offers to go back alone herself, and sends Padmavati to console her husband. So, too, she is very anxious not to upset the plan of Yaugandharayana, though she is the person made to suffer by it. She does not allow Padmavati to take any blame on herself for treating her as an attendant on her, and says to her "Rise up, rise up, oh gracious woman! If anything offends, it is your prostrating to me unnecessarily, for nothing at all". Her moving with the maids was that of the natural familiarity of a high-born lady with common folk, not fearing in the least, like upstarts, that such a thing would bring her down in the esteem of the maids.

## PADMAVATI

Padmavati is quite different from Vasavadatta, though equally lovable. She loves her husband, but is not above seeing his failings. Thus, she remarks "Now, my noble lord is playing Vasantaka's part", in other words, that he is playing the fool. She is a gracious woman, fond of vigorous exercise, like the ball game, whereas Vasavadatta is fonder of the lute than of the ball. Padmavati is much simpler and less subtle, as Vasavadatta's explanations of her three inadvertent expressions easily satisfied her. Hers was an unsuspecting, generous mind, spacious in its scope, limpid in its flow, and pure from top to bottom. She bore malice to none. She wanted none to suffer for her sake. Seeing all the fuss made about her headache, she did not even go to the room arranged for her, probably from the same feeling of contempt for fussing that an English sportswoman, say a Mrs. Mollison, would have experienced. Her treatment of the maids and Avantika was exemplary, tender, kind, considerate and free. She allowed such liberty to those under her that her maid could say, in her presence that Udayana lacked all courtesy, by preferring his dead wife, Vasavadatta, to Padmavati. But, she corrected her, all the same, and said that Udayana, far from lacking courtesy, had shown great courtesy, by remembering the merits of Vasavadatta even after her death. This extorted from Vasavadatta the compliment "My dear, your words are worthy of your exalted birth."

Padmavati has a good stock of humour, like all healthy persons. Thus, instead of getting angry with the

jester for his giving out the same silly excuse about the pollen of the *kasa* flowers falling into the eyes, which Vasavadatta had given out already and the king was going to give later on, she remarks indulgently "The chivalrous master has a chivalrous servant''. She does not tell the king anything, even after hearing this stale excuse trotted out by him, for the third time. This graciousness of mind is something which all humanity will appreciate.

So, too her delicacy at sitting with Udayana, in the place of Vasavadatta, when the messengers from Ujjaini wanted to see him, does her honour and credit.

She is equally intelligent, though less subtle than Vasavadatta. The way in which she decided whether Lady Avantika was Vasavadatta by calling for Udayana's portrait, and comparing him with the likeness, will show this. So, too, she was not taken in by the silly excuse about the pollen of the *kasa* flowers being the cause of Udayana's tears. Nor was she surprised at Udayana's preferring Vasavadatta to her, as she must have guessed that even before.

She is pious, and lavish in her gifts. That exquisite scene in the hermitage when the chamberlain, at her behest asks the hermits what gifts they want; her desire to see the portraits of her husband and Vasavadatta and do honour to them; her spending a day at the hermitage, all show this. She is, by no means, a lover of authority or superiority. At her instance, the chamberlain asks the hermits to go and fetch their water, faggots, flowers, grass,

etc., freely as if she were not there, as she was an upholder of the law, like the rest of her family. When we contrast this magnanimous behaviour with the many restrictions put by even petty officials, when camping in a place, her greatness will become evident.

ANGARAVATI.

We get only glimpses of Queen Angaravati, but they are delightful. She is fond of Vasavadatta, and very anxious, like all Indian mothers, to get her married suitably and, yet, grieves at the very thought of seperation consequent on such marriage. She wants the best bridegroom for her daughter, and, the moment she hears about the qualifications of Udayana, makes up her mind that he shall be her son-in-law, and makes her opinion prevail in the end, however unlikely its chances appeared at the outset. She backs out rapidly from the discussion the moment Vatsaraja's arrival is announced, and tells Mahasena that her daughter is too young for him to worry about her marriage just then. Mahasena gets an inkling, but only an inkling, of her ideas, and he asks her to remember that Vatsaraja is their foe. The Queen has a keen sense of honour. On hearing that Udayana has eloped with Vasavadatta, and not knowing that he has married her, she wants to commit suicide, and has to be saved from it by Mahasena, who assures her about Udayana's having married Vasavadatta, having known it himself from some messenger carrying Yaugandharayana's reply to Bharatarohaka, that no Bharata King will look at a maiden's face or teach her without first marrying, her, or

guessing it himself from his knowledge of the ways of the Bharatas.

Angaravati's message to Udayana, sent through the chamberlain and nurse, is touching, affectionate and graceful. It may be noted, in this connection, that the wife's mother is as popular in India as she is unpopular in England, just as a husband's mother is as unpopular in India as she is popular in England. So, Angaravati, Udayana's wife's mother, is shown as a kindly, affable and lovable thing. She must have been pretty able, to have become the head of sixteen Queens, and, virtually, the presiding deity over Ujjaini.

### YAUGANDHARAYANA

Yaugandharayana's character, as depicted in these two plays, is a grand one. An outstanding trait is his sacrificing everything for the sake of political ends, in this case, however, the independence and liberty of his king and country, and not the ignoble desire to bring other countries under his master's yoke, as in the folk-lore. Thus, for the sake of saving Vatsa from the usurper, he mercilessly sacrifices the happiness, for a time, of Udayana and Vasavadatta. But, it must be remembered that he does not spare himself also. If he is quite content to make Udayana a polygamist, he is himself willing to become a madman. His pride in his country is as great as that of Bismarck in Germany, or Chatham in England.

He is not an unlearned demagogue or a chance fovourite getting into high power. He is a hereditary minister's

son, and has read all the books on politics available in his time. He scoffs at Bharatarohaka for the failure of his half-baked tricks with elephants, etc., and takes legitimate pride in his own successful counter-trick. He openly boasts about the victory won by his intellect and long training. The ingenuity with which he devises the plan for the release of his king, the swiftness with which he revises that plan, and converts it into a plan for releasing the king from the prison and Vasavadatta from the inner apartments of the palace, the masterly way in which he fills Ujjaini with his spies, and makes that town another Kausambi, except for the walls and the flags, his ingenious devices for making elephants run amok, his capacity to win over Mahasena's men to his side, his keeping himself well informed of current events through his spies,—all these show his mastery of the politics of those days.

But, he is not a mere politician. Like all the greatest politicians of the world, he is also a soldier. His is not the kind of decadent politics dependent on mere intrigue. He can fight and fight well too. Single-handed, he fought the troops of Mahasena, and kept them at bay till his master had time to escape with Vasavadatta. Even though his sword was broken in twain by an elephant's tusk, he continued to fight. He was brave, and did not at all supplicate for mercy when caught. Fearlessly, he told Bharatarohaka, when asked what the political science advised about a foe vanquished in battle, "death".

He had a high sense of duty for himself and for others. When he was caught napping, and his king was

taken prisoner, he described the king's message to him as an expression of his opinion that he had done nothing in return for the food, honour and dignity he had received. He said that the women, by their wailing for Vatsaraja's fate, were also making the incompetence and worthlessness of the ministers patent. He took dreadful oaths to release the king, and, with single-pointed energy, concentrated on the task and achieved it. When he had achieved it, he said that he was victorious, happy and calm, and that he had finished with enmity, fear and dishonour, and felt as happy as Aswathama felt when he slew the slayer of his father. He compared his joy to that of the sages who go to the forest, of those who die after accomplishing their tasks, and of those who die without a single thing to repent for. He asked the Ujjain soldiers to allow the people who wanted to see him to do so, so that they might see how ministers should suffer for their king and country and either resolve to do so, or drop all ideas of becoming ministers. So, the desire for personal power and wealth was, according to him, the most reprehensible thing in a minister, and, we, in these days of democracy, had better emphasise that.

This sense of duty made him as hard a critic of others as of himself. He wanted to know what Rumanvan was doing when the king offered to go alone to tackle the artificial elephant. He asked Hamsaka why he had left the king, instead of following him. He did not spare even the king when he devaiated from this high standard. In withering words of irony, he queries whether he saw no shame in making love when chains were clanking.

But, he would not, for that reason, leave the king to his fate, as suggested by Vasantaka. He asked him how a man, who depended on them, his friends, and did not know good times from bad, whose eyes love and worry had dimmed, could be abandoned. (With all his bravery and sense of duty, he had also his inner misgivings as to how his king, for whom he was sacrificing himself, would view it all, as is shown by verse No. 15 in Act VI of "The Vision of Vasavadatta.")

He had a great pride in the Bharata race, the premier royal family of India. Verse 17 in Act IV of "Yaugandharayana's Vows" and verse 16 in Act VI of "The Vision of Vasavadatta" show this beautifully. No Indian can help being touched by the remarkable beauty of these simple sentiments, and, be it noted, the principal thing attributed to those ideal monarchs was the utter freedom from lust for other people's women, a thing shown by Kalidasa also to be a dominant trait of Dushyanta. The description of Udayana's ancestors, the Bharata Kings, by Mahasena, as those who loved and were loved by the Vedas, and who were the beloved of their subjects, shows that Yaugandharayana is not making any false claim on behalf of his kings.

Like all leaders of men, Yaugandharayana considerate to his men, and could command great devotion from them. Thus, Salaka, a mere messenger, told him that though the way was long, his love for him would make him go further. Rumanvan and Vasantaka put on the disguises of a monk and beggar for his sake. Vasavadatta was so convin-

ced that he was working for Udayana's welfare that she consented to his horrible plan willingly. All this shows the magnetic influence he had over his subordinates and servants. But, just as genius is 99 per cent perspiration and 1 percent inspiration, magnetic influence is also 99 persent consideration and 1 percent. inexplicable attraction. Yaugandharayana asks Salaka to rest awhile, requests Hamsaka to sit down, finds an excuse for Hamsaka's naming him against ceremonial etiquette, is very considerate to the Queen-Mother and her feelings as a mother, and gives Vijaya excellent instructions for gently breaking the news.

He has also a high sense of friendship, as verse 3 in Act I and verse 7 in Act III of "Yaugandharayana's Vows" will show. The Queen-Mother, too, in her message to him, said that he was a friend before he was a minister and, so, was another son to her, and should restore her son to her. These things emphasise the beliefs of those times that friendship was a bond stronger than that of relationship and that son's friends were like sons.

For all his being the prime minister of the king, and a stickler for his king's honour, prestige and authority, he had a righteous indignation against unnecessary exercise of authority, as is shown by his condemnation of the Magadha king's servants, when they asked people in the hermitage to move aside (verse 3 of Act I of "The Vision of Vasavadatta"). In telling language, he said that those who were asking people to move from the path were themselves moving away from the path of righteousness.

He was entirely without a selfish desire for advancement or aggrandisement or prosperity. Verse 9 of Act I in "The Vision of Vasavadatta" correctly expresses his attitude. He was, of course, capable of sudden anger, like all strong men. Bharatarohaka described him as an angry snake insulted and put in basket. His anger at Mahasena's trick in capturing Udayana is shown by his setting fire to several houses in Ujjain.

But, he had many noble impulses. He was very sensitive regarding kindness. He expresses that death would have been better than the offer of a golden chalice to him who had set fire to many houses belonging to those who offered it to him, and when the fires were still burning (verse 22 in Act IV of "*Yaugandharayana's Vows*"). This is reminiscent of that very curious play "*A woman killed by kindness*". He is also generous, as is seen from his warm tribute to Rumanvan on hearing about his frank words of advice to Udayana in the Elephant Forest, and his wishing that he could be as free as Rumanvan. (This is also seen from his even more generous praise of Rumanvan in Act I, verse 15, of "The vision of Vasavadatta", and this, in spite of the fact that Rumanvan was still in the Court as minister, whereas he himself was wandering about in a hermit's disguise)

He was essentially an optimist, and a believer in human effort, though, like all wise men, he recognized that sometimes Fate would prevail over the best efforts and nullify them. The famous verse 18 in Act I of "Yaugandharayana's Vows", and his efforts to release

Udayana show his optimism and belief in human effort. But, verse 3 of Act I and his remark to Hamsaka that Fate is stronger, show the other side of the shield. Indeed Yaugandharayana seems to have read the two stories in the Panchatantra, one (The Weaver Who Fought Against Fate) showing human effort prevailing over Fate, and the other (The Votary Of Fate) showing Fate's power.* He had no great belief in things superstitious, thought he did not avoid any prevalent custom, simply on the ground that it might also be somewhat superstitious. Thus, he is quite willing to have the auspicious cord made and blessed by the married ladies for sending it to Vatsaraja to ensure his safety from enemies, demons, tricks, etc., but, like a modern, requests the Queen-Mother to send it at once, even if it were to be made and blessed by only one married woman, and he alludes to its uselessness when it arrived after the fatal news.

In the matter of astrology, he seems to have been credulous. He made all his plans about Vatsaraja's marriage with Padmavati basing them on the prediction of Pushpaka, Bhadraka and other eminent astrologers that padmavati was sure to become the consort of Vatsaraja. Of course, in defence of this, we can say that that particular prediction proved to be right; and, so, Yaugandharayana was not proved to be wrong, as he believed only in it, and did not believe in any prediction which went wrong. Shakespeare, in his Julius Caesar,

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* *See my* "Panchatantra and Hitopadesa Stories", stories Nos. 22 and 21.

seems to blame Caesar for not acting on the astrologer's prediction about the Ides of March.[1]

His was an adept at disguises The great prime minister of Vatsa could run about in the streets of Ujjain as a contemptible madman, carrying sweets with him, and, bawling out "sweets, sweets". He could disguise himself effectively as a hermit, and even Udayana would not recognize him at first. He had not become, fossilized, like lesser men, by his job, but could be different things to different men, a sign of intellectual dynamism.

He intelligence was sharp as a razor, though also heavy as a hammer. His quick and ready retorts to Bharatarohaka, repelling every attack; his witty and sarcastic remarks about Mahasena's army and the carelessness of Mahasena's ministers who took such good care of the casket after the jewel was gone, and envisaged the problem of lopping the branches after the trunk had been cut, all show this. Peshwa Baji Rao, I, the great prime minister of Sahu Chatrapati, when he said "Cut the trunk the branches will fall off by themselves" was only echoing Yaugandharayana's words. When Yaugandharayana was told that Vatsaraja had been captured, he was not taken in, and replied, with convincing arguments, as to why the report could not be true. So, too, he was not taken in by Udayana's specious excuse that, in desiring to take away Vasavadatta, he was only anxious to be more fully revenged on Mahasena for the trick played on him.

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1 This Act represents the conversation in Code language between the Vatsa agents, the ordinary meaning being innocent and the hidden meaning being full of political significance,

He had a philosopher's proper estimate of things earthly, as his words in verse 4 of Act I in "The Vision of Vasavadatta" will show.

He had a commanding appearance, an iron will and a booming and distinctive voice. Few people dared to oppose him. The jester, the boldest of the lot, suggested to him the abandoning of Vatsaraja to his fate, but got a crushing answer, and kept quiet. Rumanvan did not dare even to suggest any such thing. There are certain strong personalities in the world who can crush opposition like a steamroller, whether, they call themselves monarchs, aristocrats, democrats or even communists, and Yaugandharayana was, undoubtedly, one of them.

He had an inborn capacity to organise, as is shown by his organising Vatsaraja's release from Ujjaini, the fire at Lavanaka, the entrustment of Vasavadatta to Padmavati, etc. Of course, he had the necessary psychological insight. Thus, he knew that Vasavadatta would be well treated by Padmavati; that Padmavati would not go back upon her word once given, and that the king of Magadha would offer Padmavati to Vatsaraja, the moment he became a widower, and would offer his help for regaining his kingdom. This psychological insight is also seen in his advice to Vijaya how to break the sad news to the Queen-Mother. and his correct analysis of the weakness of Mahasena's army in verse 4 of Act I of "Yaugandharayana's Vows", and in many other passages. His remarks that even deities, when unrecognised, are insulted by the world, show his profound insight into human nature and conduct.

He was an impetuous man, like all men of deep emotion and heroic actions. When he heard from Hamsaka about Vatsaraja's calamity, he thought of putting an end to his own life. His taking oaths also shows his impetuous nature.

He was fully conscious of his own defects, as is shown by his self-condemnation to Hamsaka, and from verse 22 in Act IV of "Yaugandharayana's Vows", and other passages.

He had his own share of the very human desire for praise and popularity. He asks the soldiers of Ujjaini to allow him to be seen by the citizens after his heroic deeds, so that they might not remember him merely as the contemptible madman who had been wandering about the streets. He was very highly pleased by the Queen-Mother's referring to him as a son, and by Udayana's sending him a special message, instead of to the Council of Ministers. The very fact that, before taking his first vow, he asks Vijaya as to what the Queen-Mother said, and Hamsaka as to what Udayana said, shows this. His love for Udayana is shown by the pathetic words of grief he utters in verse 11 in Act I of "Yaugandharayana's Vows", on hearing about his capture, and by his initial inability to tell Vijaya about the capture, and the characteristic monosyllables which convey no meaning to her, but were uttered by him owing to excess of emotion. But, he was no courtier or flatterer or toady. His sentiments about the king's inopportune love affairs, while in jail, expressed to Rumanvan and the jester, are enough proof of it. No

wonder, Rumanvan was the person who attended on the king constantly, and not this explosive and frank premier.

In Yaugandharayana, Bhasa has portrayed a great minister and a great man, indeed, one comparable to Chanakya, Chandragupta's minister, whom the dramatist seems to have had in mind.

## RUMANVAN.

Rumanvan is a very devoted minister, and efficient in his own way. He has none of the commanding personality or intelligence of Yaugandharayana, but, is by no means, devoid of talents, as his telling Yaugandharayana that night is worse for unsuccessful people than day, though, abstractly, day and night are the same, shows, as also his suggesting of Yaugandharayana to revise his plan and convert it into one for rescuing the king from the prison and Vasavadatta from the inner apartments, instead of wasting his time in criticising the king's inopportune love-making. His devotion to the king is beautifully brought out by verses 14 and 15 of Act I of "The Vision of Vasavadatta" uttered by the student of theology, as well as by Yaugandharayana himself. He is the person chosen to attend on the king in his days of anguish after learning about Vasavadatta's death by fire. No one else could have filled that place so well, neither Yaugandharayana nor the jester. Needless to say, Rumanvan must have been a very deep fellow, as he managed to attend on the king assiduously without even giving him a hint that he knew that Vasavadatta's death was a myth. Even in the folk-

lore story, it is significant that it is by looking at Yaugandharayana and Gopalaka that Udayana suspected Vasavadatta to be alive, and not by looking at Rumanvan. It is a fact that often second-rate men, like Rumanvan, have got the tremendous capacity to retain secrets, considered to be an outstanding quality of the Civil Service in England and other advanced countries.

But, in spite of such secrecy and apparent duping, his devotion and unselfishness are so taken for granted that Udayana, on learning from Yaugandharayana that Rumanvan also knew about the plot, simply exclaimed, good-humouredly, "What a rogue Rumanvan is!"

### Vasantaka

The jester, Vasantaka is one of those glorious jesters, whom Indian literature abounds in. He is quite different from the Jester, Santhushta, in *Avimaraka*, and the jester, Maitreya, in *Charudatta*. He is like all Bhasa's jesters, not a mere buffoon or fool, but is 'a jolly good fellow.' Like all jesters, he loves the good things of life, and has no sympathy with sackcloth and ashes, or rolling on the ground in agony for things which cannot be remedied. He is very glad when his grieving and wandering and god-forsaken master is once more in velvet at the Magadha Court, with mosaic rooms to bathe in, delicious dishes to eat, etc. His preference for Vasavadatta over Padmavati is solely based on that lady's giving him endless sweetmeats to eat, be it remembered, not at all a bad test to judge people by, seeing that the whole world

revolves on the belly, not only with the jester, but with all the rest of us.

But, the jester is no mere glutton with no other qualifications. He can put on effective disguises, as when he disguises himself as a beggar in Act III of "Yaugandha-rayana's Vows", and utters delicious nonsense about sweets and Siva's being a thief. His remarks incidentally show his knowledge regarding mythology, and about colours and paintings.

He has an insatiable curiosity, as when he wants Udayana, who is newly wedded to Padmavati to tell him whether he loved Vasavadatta or Padmavati more, and keeps on pressing him to answer, despite his obvious reluctance, not taking mere hints showing which way his inclination lay, but wanting plain answers, to the disgust of Padmavati. He is also quite a good intermediary and liaison officer, never allowing the chain of communication between Yaugandharayana and Rumanvan on the one hand and Udayana on the other to break. He has also usual Brahman's grouse (from those times to these) that the days of the Brahmans are over. Of course, he is a Brahman, as all jesters have to be in Sanskrit dramas, for the simple reason that none but a man belonging to the superior castes, and thoroughly non-violent and, so, not at all dangerous as a possible competitor, can be allowed to be so familiar with the king.

He is not a toady or mere flatterer, and is fully capable of moving on equal terms with the king, a rare quality in any age. He is not a poltroon. In his dealings with the

king, he defies him to use force on him if he could, and makes the king abandon that mode of approach and take to entreaty. He knows to move freely with servants and make them honour, respect and love him, another rare quality. The way in which the maid-servants speak to him is evidence of this. He has fits of disgust and anger, too, as when he asks Yaugandharayana to leave Vatsaraja to his fate.

He has a delicious sense of humour. When Yaugandharayana and Rumanvan tell him that they do not understand what he says, he replies, in unforgettable words, "I understand my thoughts first, and *you* next." So, too, when Yaugandharayana says that it would be praiseworthy to go on spending the rest of their days in Ujjaini even though Vatsaraja would not be rescued, he replies, humorously, that it would be praiseworthy if the world understood why they were doing so. When he is further told by the indignant Yaugandharayana that the servants of the King of Vatsa were not doing anything to please the world, but only to please their master, pat came the reply that the master too would not realise their sacrifices Vasantaka, in short, is a person, who need, not fear comparison with the jesters in King Lear, or any other jester in the dramas of the world.

BHARATAROHAKA.

Bharatarohaka is depicted as a minister priding in his knowledge of politics, but found wanting when weighed in the scales. He has got great influence over Mahasena and was responsible for the trick which captured

Udayana. But, as Yaugandharayana remarks justly, the elephant trick did more injury than good to Ujjaini, as Vatsaraja went away taking Vasavadatta and burning half the houses in Ujjaini, by cleverly reversing the trick on the head of the surprised Bharatarohaka. Like third-rate people, Bharatarohaka saw only the consequences *he* intended, and not all the natural consequences of his acts. Even in his verbal duel with Yaugandharayana, he was uniformly defeated. Of course, he had sense enough to recognise his inferiority to that great minister. In fact, he met him half-hesitatingly, and expecting all that he got. He had also the saving commonsense of knowing when he was beaten. He ordered Yaugandharayana's chains to be taken off, and reversed his policy of hostility to Vatsaraja, and, in the end, agreed to Mahasena's policy, and must have taken part in the marriage, in effigy, of Vatsaraja and Vasavadatta, though with mental reservations. He must have, needless to say, rejoiced at Aruni's usurpation and made Mahasena withhold help from Udayana.

## THE CHAMBERLAINS.

The chamberlains of Ujjaini and Magadha, shown in these plays, are a lovable, dignified and learned lot. Of course, custom required that they should be aged Brahmins of learning, loyalty, character, commonsense, calmness, truth and knowledge of hospitality and etiquette. Badarayana, Mahasena's chamberlain, is shown as having a great pride in his master and kingdom, and taking a vivid interest in his master's affairs, like the princess's marriage. He knows how to entertain guests,

according to their gradations, inevitable with kings. He is a stickler for etiquette, and prostrates to Mahasena when, in his excitement at the capture of Vatsaraja, he did not communicate the news with the usual prefix "Victory to Mahasena." We may be certain that nothing that even Mahasena could do would have prevented Badarayana from prostrating at this gross breach of etiquette. With solemn pride, he offers to Mahasena the *veena* Ghoshavati. He described Vatsaraja's condition with skill, and runs errands, despite his old age, efficiently and promptly. He announces his arrival at Kausambi with pardonable vanity and pomp. He asks Udayana to sit down and hear Mahasena's message, though he, undoubtedly, rejoices at Udayana's standing up initially to hear that message, and praises him for doing so, as an act worthy of the son of Vaidehi. He has got a lot of worldly wisdom in him, as when he remarks about Mahasena's not accepting or rejecting any of the suitors, probably because the man destined to wed Vasavadatta had not sent his message and when, in verse 10 of Act VI of "The Vision of Vasavadatta", he asks, with the mellowed wisdom of old age, "Who can arrest the hand of death, when the victim's hour has come? Who can save the pitcher when the ropes break asunder? Who can prevent the perishing and springing of trees and men in their due seasons?" Verse 24 of Act IV of "Yaugandharayana's Vows" brings to mind Shelley's famous line "Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught."

The chamberlain of Magadha belongs to the same general category, though there are some individual

differences. Like Badarayana, he has also a pride in his king and princess, and proclaims that they would never break the law. He asks the hermits to go and follow their avocations, and fetch grass, firewood and water, as the stay of Padmavati in their midst would not make the slightest difference. But, unlike Badarayana, he exhibits an intolerance of the exercise of harsh authority, the result of his serving a less pompous and authoritarian king. He asks the guards not to push people out of the way in the hermitage and bring their king to shame. He invites the hesitant student of theology to walk freely into the hermitage, as that place is common to all. He wants the student to accept his hospitality, as he had gone there before. It is difficult to imagine Badarayana inviting a student to share his hospitality, though he is in his proper place in entertaining the Hon'ble Jaivanti. To Badarayana, nature exists only to glorify Mahasena, whereas the chamberlain of Magadha shows an instinctive love of nature in verse 16 of Act I of "The Vision of Vasavadatta" The chamberlain of Magadha has his stock of wisdom no whit inferior to Badarayana's. Thus, he remarks that it is easier to part with wealth or life or hoarded merit, but very difficult to guard over a young woman deserted by her husband, night and day. He has got a picturesque and effective way of putting things, as is clear from verse 3 of Act I. He expresses a desire that he might meet Yaugandharayana, disguised as a wandering hermit, again, a thing which Badarayana would not have done, unless, of course, he knew the hermit to be Yaugandharayana, in which case he could utter graceful sentiments as in verse 21 of Act IV of "Yaugandharayana's Vows."

The Magadhan chamberlain can deliver his master's message with dignity and skill, as is shown in verse 12 of Act V of "The Vision of Vasavadatta". On the whole, these chamberlains of Bhasa impress one in the same way as the high-class butlers of Wodehouse do, resembling one another and differing from one another just as those dignitaries do.

MINOR CHARACTERS.

Even the minor characters in these plays have got an individuality and charm. Thus, the student of theology flits in and flits out, like a sparrow, entering through one door and going out by another. But, Bhasa makes him narrate vividly the love of Udayana for Vasavadatta, the rolling of the king on the ground with the charred ornaments of the Queen, and the devoted attendance of Rumanvan on the king. Not content with that, he makes the student describe a hermitage in loving and feeling words, (verse 12 of Act I of "The Vision of Vasavadatta"). The celibate's shyness and avoidance of women are shown by the expressive words "Oh, but the woman-folk!" The student, like all ancient students of India, has no desire to linger longer than necessary even for the sake of the company of such a dignitary like the chamberlain of Magadha, and, of course, does not think of looking at the two most beautiful woman of the age, Vasavadatta and Padmavati, except to remark that these women presented a hindrance to his entering the hermitage. The way in which Udayana's episode affected him was, characteristically, that he had

to break off his *Vedic* studies. His expressive sentiment that the dead Queen was living in Udayana's love, and his description of Lavanaka being a wilderness after the departure of Vatsaraja, show him to be quite a keen observer of human nature.

Gatrasevaka too has got an individuality. His amusing story of his pledging Bhadravati's goad, necklet, garland, bell and whip in succession, culminating with the confession that he had pledged the elephant itself, his nonsensical gibberish, and effective drunken pose, reinforced with a powerful drunkard's song, and the sudden change of attitude when he hears of the escape of Vatsaraja with Vasavadatta, and retorts to the loyal guard of Mahasena that he was not a drunkard but a spy of Yaugandharayana, and that he would call his friends who would, like king cobras, come to the place, and his spirited war songs (verses 2, 3 and 4 of Act IV of "Yaugandharayana's Vows"), all show him to be a consummate spy and soldier, a combination which has become famous after the late World War and this World War.

Hamsaka, too, has got his own individuality. He is a devoted servant of Vatsaraja, and has so vividly narrated the story in the Elephant Forest that we feel as if we are witnessing the events with him. He is not subservient or servile, and bluntly tells Yaugandharayana, in reply to his self-condemnation, that the message must have been sent to him owing to his not having sufficiently deserved the food, kindness and dignity received from his master,

"Very likely". He asks Yaugandharayana, when he guesses about the infantryman's information to Vatsaraja, whether he had fallen into the trap open-eyed. It is the loss of such freedom in subordinates that is largely responsible for the downfall of India.

Even the conventional female-door-keeper, Vijaya, has been given some individuality. When she learns the sorrowful news of Vatsaraja's capture, and is asked to tell the Queen-mother about it, she says "I shall go and tell her, unhappy me !", thus putting in a human touch instead of behaving like an automaton. So, too, when Yaugandharayana, in the depth of his sorrow, is unable to speak out, and says "It is thus", she tells him "Tell me sir, tell me". This shows that she, too, was moving freely with the great minister, and was not simply a mechanical portress.

The maids of Padmavati in "The Vision of Vasavadatta" have also their individuality. They are lively, good-humoured, and fond of poetic figures. Thus, a maid compares Vasavadatta to the crescent moon obscured by the mist, and describes Udayana as the God of Love incarnate, but without the bow and arrow. The nurses, too, are not without something worth saying. The nurse of Padmavati tells Vasavadatta, in reply to her wonder at Udayana's grieving so much for Vasavadatta and yet celebrating his betrothal to another so soon, "Madam, the holy truths taught in our scriptures get imbedded in the hearts of great men, and, so, they easily get consoled in the midst of great calamities." She is also shrewd enough to find out events as they happen, and soon after they

happen, and consoles Vasavadatta by telling her that Udayana went to Rajagriha for some other purpose, and that the king, finding in him a combination of wealth, beauty and nobility, himself offered Padmavati's hand to him.

The nurse of Vasavadatta is no whit behind the nurse of Padmavati. Just like the two chamberlains, the two nurses belong to the same category. Vasavadatta's nurse chides Udayana for exhibiting excessive sorrows, and carries about the painting of Vasavadatta with pardonable pride and self-importance, and shows it to Padmavati, and delivers Angaravati's message to Udayana with the consummate ability of a messenger of modern days. There is no doubt that Bhasa loved these maids and nurses as much as he did his major characters. In the scheme of his dramas, the little ones had their parts to play as much as the great ones.

The hermit woman shown in Act I of "The Vision of Vasavadatta' is a delightful figure, though we get only just a vision of her. India's pride is that the highest in the land are not soldiers or kings, but saints and hermits. Bhasa, an upholder of the Indian system, brings the truth home vividly by making this obscure hermit woman receive the princess Padmavati *sitting*. She talks to Padmavati naturally, as woman to woman with none of that awareness of difference between a princess and a commoner, which is so painfully jarring and destructive of essential human friendship. She tells Padmavati that a hermitage is the home of all way-

farers, and, so, she is welcome. She does not say, as many ladies would do now, that the hermitage belongs to the king, and that the Princess should *honour* it by walking into it, but welcomes Padmavati as a *wayfarer*. Those who think that ancient India lacked human dignity and self-respect and the democratic instinct had better ponder over this. She is also a kindly woman interested in the welfare of all people. She makes loving enquiries about Padmavati's marriage, and ends by wishing Padmavati a good husband soon, and by wishing Vasavadatta a speedy reunion with her husband. She is also shrewd. On looking at Vasavadatta, she remarks that she must also be a Princess, thus piercing through her disguise as humble Avantika.

Not content with giving an individuality to human beings the great Bhasa wanted to give individuality even to trees, hermitages and instruments. The hermitage near Rajagriha has got its individual description. The Veena, Ghoshavati, has been so described and extolled, both generally and in verse 12 of Act II of "Yaugandharayana's Vows" and in verses 1, 2 and 3 of Act VI of "The Vision of Vasavadatta", that it has got an individuality far above the average of human characters in modern dramas. Such is the magic wand of Bhasa. No wonder that Bana remarked about the many and interesting characters in his plays!

# YAUGANDHARAYANA'S VOWS.

## CHARACTERS.

Men :—

*Yaugandharayana* : Udayana's chief minister ; he appears in the guise of a madman also.

*Sramanaka* : Udayana's minister Rumanvan, disguised as a Buddhist Monk.

*Jester* : Udayana's boon companion, Vasantaka.

*Brahmana* : A man of Yaugandharayana.

*Hamsaka* : Udayana's aide-de-camp.

*Gatrasevaka* : Yaugandharayana's spy disguised as the mahout of Bhadravati, Vasavadatta's elephant.

*Salaka* : Yaugandharayana's intended messenger.

*Nirmundaka* : Major Domo of Yaugandharayana's house.

*Mahasena* : Pradyota, King of Avanti, Vasavadatta's father.

*Bharatarohaka* : Mahasena's chief minister.

*Badarayana* : Mahasena's chamberlain.

*A Guard* : Vasavadatta's servant.

*Two orderlies*: Bharatarohaka's men.

Stage-Director

Women:—

*Angaravati*: Mahasena's queen.

*Vijaya*: Female door-keeper in Yaugandharayana's house.

Actress.

## IMPORTANT CHARACTERS REFERRED TO, BUT NOT APPEARING, IN THE PLAY.

Men:—

*Udayana*: King of Vatsa.

*Salankayana*: Mahasena's minister.

Women:—

*Vasavadatta*: Daughter of Mahasena.

*The Queen*: Mother of Vatsaraja.

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# ACT I

## Prelude.

(At the end of the Opening, enter the Stage-Director),

*Stage-Director*:

May the son of Yaugandhara,[1]
The lord of many mighty hosts,
He who is called the infant King,
Full of vigour exceeding great,
Who gave victory to Indra,
In spite of all the demons' boasts,
With his energy amazing,
Protect you from all blows of Fate! (1),

(walks about looking towards the curtain)

Come here, my good lady.

(Enter an actress)

*Actress*: Here I am, Sir.

*Stage-Director*: Sing a song, my lady, and put this audience into a good humour. After that, we shall begin our play. Why this hesitation? Aren't you going to sing?

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1. Yugandhara, or the Lord of Universal destruction at the end of every aeon, is Siva, the third member of the Hindu Trinity, the first two being Brahma the Creator, and Vishnu the Preserver. His younger son, the infant King, is Skanda or Kartikeya or Subrahmanya who saved Indra from two terrible demons called Taraka and Padmasura. The elder son, or Adult King, is Ganesa or the Belly-God.

By paronomasia, the names of all the principal characters in the play are introduced in this verse, by words applicable to these and to the gods alike.

*Actress*: Sir, I am worried, I dreamt that all was not well with my relatives. I wish you would send a man to find out if all is well with them.

*Stage-Director*: Certainly.

A man shall I send, able, and to me attached,

(Voice behind the scene)

Salaka, are you ready ?

*Stage-Director*: Like this one by Yaugandharayana despatched. (2)

(Exeunt)

(Prelude ends)

## ACT I

*Scene*: Vatsaraja's palace in Kausambi.

(Enter Yaugandharayana with Salaka.)

*Yaugandharayana*: Salaka, are you ready?

*Salaka*: Yes, sir.

*Yaugandharayana*: You have a very long way to go.

*Salaka*: My devotion for you will make me go much further, sir.

*Yaugandharayana*: Ha! A strong man or a devoted man will go far. That is why they say:

A hard task to faithful friends entrust,
Or to able men of approved worth:
But, howev'r good we make the plan we trust,
Its success depends on Fate, on earth. (3)

Tomorrow, the king leaves the Bamboo Forest and goes, through three dense forests, to the Elephant Forest. You must meet him before he starts.

*Salaka*: I suppose, sir, I shall be sent with a letter containing the information to be conveyed.

*Yaugandharayana*: Vijaya!

(Enter Vijaya).

*Vijaya*: Here I am, sir.

*Yaugandharayana*: Vijaya, hurry up with that letter and the amulet[1].

*Vijaya*: All right, sir. (Exit).

*Yaugandharayana*: Have you ever been that way before?

*Salaka*: No, sir, but I have heard it described.

*Yaugandharayana*: That too is a sign of wisdom. Well, we have received a confidential report that Pradyota means to dupe our king by placing an artificial blue elephant in the Elephant Forest, surrounding it with forest elephants. I hope that our master has not already been deceived into believing in the reality of this blue elephant. But, oh how terribly afraid Pradyota must be of the King of the Vatsas! The inefficiency of his vast army is clear:—

His army is large, but lacks unity of aim;
Brave warriors there are but few in that array;
And they don't love him; so, instead of waging war,
He prefers to take to tricks, like this deed of shame,

1 Worn as a kind of protection against demons, enemies, evil influences etc. It is intended for the King of Vatsa.

Which cannot take him or his country very far:
An undevoted army's like a loveless-wife,
Useless in war just as she is in daily life.

(*Enter Vijaya*).

*Vijaya*: Here is the letter, Sir. The queen-mother says "The auspicious cord is being urgently prepared and blessed by all the married ladies."

*Yaugandharayana*: Vijaya, kindly tell Her Majesty, on my behalf, "please let me have the amulet at once, whether prepared and blessed by all the married ladies, or by only one."

*Vijaya*: Very well, sir. (Exit).

(*Enter Nirmundaka*)

*Nirmundaka*: I wish you good health, sir.

*Yaugandharayana*: What is it, Nirmundaka ?

*Nirmundaka*: Hamsaka, His Majesty's aide-de-camp, has come here, sir, from camp.

*Yaugandharayana*: Why has Hamsaka come alone ? Salaka, rest awhile. Either you will have to go at triple speed, or, not at all.

*Salaka*: Very well, sir. (Exit).

*Yaugandharayana*: Nirmundaka, bring in Hamsaka.

*Nirmundaka*: All right, sir. (Exit).

*Yaugandharayana*: (to himself) Hamsaka has never left the king's side before. His coming here alone now fills my mind with apprehensions. For,

Like a man who has left his kinsmen in trouble
And gone to a foreign land and just returned,
My mind's on tenter-hooks as I'm unable
To guess if the news is good or bad till I've learned. (5)

*(Enter Hamsaka and Nirmundaka).*

*Nirmundaka*: Come in, sir.

*Hamsaka*: Where is His Honour?

*Nirmundaka*: There he is, standing. Go up to him.

*Hamsaka*: (approaching) Your health, sir.

*Yaugandharayana*: Hamsaka, our king has not yet gone to the Elephant Forest, I hope?

*Hamsaka*: Alack, sir, the king reached that forest yesterday.

*Yaugandharayana*: Alas, it is useless then to send any messenger now. We have been duped. Is there any room for hope? Or, should we end our lives this very day?

*Hamsaka*: The king still lives, sir,

*Yaugandharayana*: "Still lives" you say. That means that a lesser calamity has befallen him. Our master must have been taken prisoner.

*Hamsaka*: Your guess is right, sir. The king has been captured.

*Yaugandharayana*: What, my royal master made prisoner! Alas! Pradyota has achieved a great thing by his good fortune. From this day forth, the incompetence and shame of the ministers of the Vatsa King stand self-revealed. Where is Rumanvan now, so wise in

providing for events before they happen? What has become of the cavalry?

Our devoted and loving cavalry troops,
Well-born, well-trained, replete with warlike virtues,
Did they get lost in the meandering loops
Of the forest path, or did they, like statues,
Stand and fight against unequal odds and die?
Or were they bought with enemy gold, and fly? (6)

*Hamsaka*: If all his men were with him, our king would not have suffered this calamity, sir.

*Yaugandharayana*: What! My master was not accompanied by the whole of his men?

*Hamsaka*: No, sir. Be pleased to listen.

*Yaugandharayana*: You are tired. Sit down.

*Hamsaka*: All right, sir. (sits down.) Hear the story, sir. Yesternight, just before dawn, the pleasantest time for riding, the king crossed the Narmada river by the Sandy Ford. He left the court ladies in his camp in the Bamboo Forest, and then set out for the Elephant Forest by a narrow track, used by deer, with only his royal umbrella-carriers, and a small body of men trained to tackle elephants.

*Yaugandharayaṇa*: Then?

*Hamsaka*: When the sun was just an arrow-shot above the horizon, and we had gone many miles, and were only two miles away from the Madagandhira Mountain, we saw a herd of elephants standing in a

half-dry pond and throwing up mud, and looking like a half-finished and uneven stone wall.[1]

*Yaugandharayana*: And then ?

*Hamsaka*: While our troops were reconnoitering, and the herd of elephants had huddled together, getting suspicious about our movements, an infantry-man, the author of all this trouble, went up to our master.

*Yaugandharayana*: Stop! Did he not say "Two miles from here, I saw an elephant that was blue all over, except for the nails and tusks, and with its body hidden by jasmine creepers and *sal* trees ? "

*Hamsaka*: What! Your Honour knew about that! Then the calamity has occurred while you were fully awake!

*Yaugandharayana*: Alas, Hamsaka, a man may be awake, and yet, Fate, which is stronger than man, may prevail. Proceed.

*Hamsaka*: Then, our master gave that wicked fellow a hundred gold pieces and said to us "It must be what is called an emperor-elephant, or *Neelakuvalayatanu*, described in a book on elephants which I have read. Please watch this herd carefully while I go with my lute, and tame and bring in that emperor-elephant."

*Yaugandharayana*: Did Rumanvan sit quiet, and do nothing to prevent this rash enterprise of our master?

*Hamsaka*: No, no. The minister tried to dissuade the king He begged him hard not to go alone. He said to him "It is quite possible for you to catch even the

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1 The grey backs of the elephants splashed with wet mud will look ike a half-finished wall of dark-grey boulders.

elephants of the quarters,[1] Airavana and the rest But the frontier districts are always troublesome and lawless, being difficult to supervise and govern. People living on the frontier are generally shameless and low-born. So, let us all go together. Your Majesty should not go alone."

*Yaugandharayana*: Rumanvan said all this to the king in the presence of the big men? I wish I too could show the same unspeakable devotion to the king. Go on. What happened then?

*Hamsaka*: Then, the king swore by his own life that he would go alone, and thus effectively silenced the minister, He got down from his elephant Neela-Valahaka,[2] and mounted his horse Sundarapatala,[3] and, when the sun had not yet reached the meridian, rode away with only twenty infantry men.

*Yaugandharayana*: May he be victorious! Alas in my love for him, I forgot what you told me. Well, proceed.

*Hamsaka*: After we had gone double the two miles mentioned by that infantry-man, we saw that counterfeit of a divine elephant at a distance of a hundred bows,[4] its blue colour lost in the shadows of *sal* trees of the same hue, and only the tusks gleaming in the sunlight and sticking out as if they had no body attached to them.

*Yaugandharayana*: Say rather, Hamsaka, that you saw our calamity. Go on.

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1 The elephants guarding the eight quarters of the earth.
2 "Dark cloud."
3 "Pink Beauty."
4 About 200 yards.

*Hamsaka*: Then, the king got down from his horse, saluted the gods, took his lute in his hand, and approached that false elephant. Just then, we heard a huge and concerted uproar behind us.

*Yaugandharayana*: An uproar? Proceed.

*Hamsaka*: When we turned round to find out the cause of the uproar, that artificial elephant, manned by regular soldiers in full armour, instead of by mahouts, advanced towards us!

*Yaugandharayana*: And then?

*Hamsaka*: Then the king cheered up the young men of good family who were with him, calling them by their names and family names, and telling them "This is one of Pradyota's tricks. Come with me. With my prowess, I shall nullify the foeman's ruse, despite all his unfair advantage." With these words, he entered the serried ranks of the enemy army.

*Yaugandharayana*: What! Entered the serried ranks of the enemy army! But, stay, he was right.

What else could he do, that hero?
High-minded, vexed at being caught
In such a wily strategem?
Set in narrow strait, he has fought,
Scorning to flee, of kings a gem,
Relying on his courage so! (7)

Then?

*Hamsaka*: Mounted on his horse Sundarapatala, who obeyed his slightest moves, he went about as if

sporting, and struck at the foe with even greater force than he had intended, exerting himself to the utmost against those enemies, so vastly superior in numbers. Then, when all his followers were dead, and I alone was left to protect him, no, no, to be protected by him, he fainted, at that unlucky hour of sunset, wearied with fighting the whole day, and fell from his horse, covered with innumerable injuries.

*Yaugandharayana*: The king fainted? And then?

*Hamsaka*: Then, they insulted and outraged him as they liked, binding his person, like a common man's, with rough creepers, plucked haphazardly from the nearest thicket.

*Yaugandharayana*: What, outraged the king thus!

Those arms which have many a friend's distress relieved
By a close embrace, have drawn the bow against odds,
And sent countless arrows far, arms which are believed
To have saluted but Brahmans, elders and gods,
Arms, thick, muscular and strong,like elephant's trunk,
Attached to shoulders broad,with sinews expanding,
Which have vibrated with his great bow's vibrating,
Arms fit for gold bracelets, they're now in bonds and sunk! (8)

When did the king recover consciousness?

*Hamsaka*: When those wicked fellows had done with their insults, sir.

*Yaugandharayana*: Thank God, only his body was disgraced, and not his name. Then?

*Hamsaka*: When those wretches saw that the king had recovered his consciouness, they scattered in all directions, paying an unconscious tribute to the valour of our king by crying out "He killed my brother", "He killed my father", "He killed my son", "He killed my friend", and so forth.

*Yaugandharayana*: What happened then?

*Hamsaka*: A strange thing, sir. After egging one another on to attack him, one of them resolved to do the horrible deed. He dragged the king by his hair, which had become dishevelled during the fight, and made him face south.[1] Then, taking his sword in his hand, he took a run to deliver a forcible blow with great momentum.

*Yaugandharayana*: Stop a moment, Hamsaka. Let me recover my breath!

*Hamsaka*: The wretch, rushing at great speed thus, stumbled where the ground was slippery with pools of blood, and fell down, helpless.

*Yaugandharayana*: The wretch has fallen so! See,

That land which he from invasion did protect,
That land which he from unrighteousness did save,
It, though inanimate, did now, in effect,
Save him who formerly to it so much gave. (9)

*Hamsaka*: Just then, one of Pradyota's ministers, Salankayana, who had been hit by our master with his spear and rendered unconscious in the previous fight, recovered consciousness and rushed to the spot, and

1 The region of Yama, the lord of the dead.

ordered his men not to commit any more violence on our master.

*Yaugadharayana*: And then?

*Hamsaka*: Then, he saluted the king, an unexpected courtesy at that time, and released him from his bonds.

*Yaugandharayana*: My master released! Well-done, Salankayana! Adversity can make even an enemy into a friend. Hamsaka, I feel somewhat relieved now And what did that good man do next?

*Hamsaka*: The king was too badly wounded to ride; so. Salankayana laid him in a litter, and, with many small attentions and courteous expressions of sympathy for his injuries, had him taken to Ujjaini in that litter carried on the shoulders of men.

*Yaughandharayana*: My master taken away!

Ah, this is the disgrace we feared
When he to that dread forest neared.
His very pride has led him on,
Till misery made him her pawn.
That trick of Pradyota has fared
Far better than to hope he dared. (10)

Our master never cared for Pradyota before,
How will he face him, as prisoner, I wonder!
He who has never known but polite words before,
How will he bear harsh, insulting words, I wonder!
He whose righteous anger blazed forth unchecked before,
How will he now curb and control it, I wonder!

For humiliation is a prisoner's lot
Be he treated ill or well, insulted or not. (11)

(Enter female door-keeper)

*Female door-keeper* : Here's the amulet sir.

*Yaugandharayana* :

Ah, what use now are all these things, brought
When our good fortune has come to nought ?
They're like the meaningless lustration
Of horses after the war's cessation. (12)

*Female door-keeper* : Here is the amulet, sir.

*Yaugandharayana* : Put it down, Vijaya.

*Female door-keeper* : What am I to say to the Queen-Mother, sir ?

*Yaugandharayana* : Vijaya, it is thus.

*Female door-keeper* : What is thus ?

*Yaugandharayana* : This.

*Female door-keeper* : Tell me, sir, tell me.

*Yaugandharayana* : (to himself) Well, I cannot hide this matter. I shall have to tell Her Majesty. (Aloud) Vijaya, steel your heart (whispers into her ear). It is like this.

*Female door-keeper* : Ah !

*Yaugandharayana* : Your name is Vijaya, is it not ? So, don't break down.

*Yemale door-keeper* : I shall go and tell her, unhappy me !

*Yaugandharayana* : Vijaya, don't tell Her Majesty all at once that the king has been taken prisoner. A mother's heart is proverbially weak, from affection. It must be protected.

*Yemale door-keeper* : Sir, how am I to break the news to her, then ?

*Yaugandharayana* : Listen.

Tell her first of War and all its evil chances,
Let her feel greatly apprehensive for his fate,
When her fear and grief have taken root and branches
Tell her all the facts, and our master's present state. (13)

*Yemale door-keeper* : 'Sir, I can manage it now. (Exit),

*Yaugandharayana* : Hamsaka, why didn't you go with the king ?

*Hamsaka* : Sir, I had resolved to do so, but Salankayana sent me here, telling me " Go to Kausambi and relate all this news."

*Yaugandharayana* : What was his idea, to make us despair on hearing the news, or to get rid of a devoted servant of our master ?

*Hamsaka* : Very likely, both, Sir.

*Yaugandharayana* : His arrogance is clearly seen in this. But he can very well afford to rejoice, as his undertaking has succeeded. Did not the king send any message to me ?

*Hamsaka* : He did, sir. As I took leave of him, he appeared to be anxious to say many things. At last, half-blinded with bunded tears, he said to me "Go

and see Yaugandha...." (stops, ashamed at having named the minister).

*Yaugandharayana* : Go on. You are only repeating the king's words.

*Hamsaka* : "Go and see Yaugandharayana " said he.

*Yaugandharayana* : What! Did he say nothing about the council of ministers, and mention only me?

*Hamsaka* : That is so.

*Yaugandharayana* : If that is so, it is because I have not taken enough precautions, because I have not done anything in return for the food I have eaten at his hands, or for the honour and dignity he has bestowed upon me.

*Hamsaka* : Sir!

*Yaugandharayana* : The king shall see me transformed.

He shall find me wherever he is,
In en'my city or in fetters,
In forest deep, aye in death's abyss,
Always devoted to his matters.
I'll outwit that king who thinks he's won,
And be by my belov'd master's side,
And be praised for faithful service done,
When he'll once more to his city ride. (14)

(Behind the scene)

Alas! Alas! our master's taken!

*Yaugandharayana* :

These women are trying to relieve their grief
With all this heart-rending weeping and wailing:

Their action brings into prominent relief
The ministers' blundering and floundering. (15)

(Enter the female door-keeper)

*Yemale door-keeper* : The queen-mother, sir...

*Yangandharayana* : Yes?

*Female door-keeper*: She says...

*Yaugandharayana*: What does she say?

*Female door-keeper*: "The brave king of Vatsa, loved by many friends, has come to this terrible fate. What shall we do to counter it? Let us honour his friends and set the thing right. You are a very wise man. You won't become despondent in adversity, or lose heart and remain inactive in difficulties or give up hope when tricked, or commit suicide when you fail. I am telling you specially this 'You were first a friend of my Vatsa Raja. Then alone, you became a minister. You are like a son unto me. Son, bring my son to me!"

*Yaugandharayana*: Ah! The queen-mother has uttered brave words worthy of this royal house. I am beholden to her for her esteem for me. Vijaya, some water.

*Yemale door-keeper*: Yes, sir (goes in and comes back) Here is water, sir.

*Yangandharayana*: Give it to me (sips the water ceremonially) Vijaya, what did the queen-mother say?

*Yemale door-keeper*: "Son, bring my son to me."

*Yaugandharayana*: Hamsaka, what did the king say?

*Hamsaka*: "Go and see Yaugandharayana."

*Yaugandharayana*: Vijaya,

If our master, caught by th' en'my, like the moon
By Rahu vile, I do not liberate soon,
My name's not Yaugandharayana, I say,
Be the consequences of this what they may![1] (16)

*Yemale door-keeper*: Amen sir (Exit).

(Enter Nirmundaka)

*Nirmundaka*: Sir, a wonderful thing has happened. A number of Brahmans were being feasted for the sake of our king's welfare. Another Brahman, dressed like a mad man, saw them eating and laughed aloud and said to them "Eat in peace, sirs, and eat to your hearts' content. This royal family will prosper." Immediately after he said this, he vanished.

*Yaugandharayana*: Is this true?

(Enter a Brahman)

*Brahman*; Here are the queer clothes that reverend Brahman wore and left behind when he left, for some purpose or other of his own. Sir, it was the reverend Dwaipayana[2] himself that came here disguised in these madman's clothes.

*Yaugandharayana*: So, Dwaipayana came here!

*Brahman*: Yes.

*Yaugandharayana*: Let me see those clothes.

*Brahman*: Here they are, sir.

*Yaugandharayana*: (putting on those clothes) Here I am, completely transformed. I feel that I have reached

1. This is his first vow.

2 "The island-born." Vyasa, a great saint.

the king's presence already. These clothes were left by him for my sake:—

This madman's guise donned by the holy man,
I'll put on, and, then, free my king I can. (17)

(Enter female door-keeper)

*Yemale door-keeper*: Sir, the queen-mother says that she wishes to see her son.[1]

*Yaugandharayana*: I shall come at once. Good sir, wait for me in the worship-room.

*Brahman*: Very well. (Exit)

*Yaugaudharayana*: Hamsaka, you may now rest awhile.

*Hamsaka*: All right, sir. (Exit)

*Yaugandharayana*: Lead the way, Vijaya.

*Yemale door-keeper*: Yes, sir.

*Yangandharayana*:

Fire is got ev'n from wood by constant churning,
Water is got from earth by patient digging:
Nothing's impossible for men of daring
Who go the proper way, ever-succeeding! (18)

(Exeunt Omnes)

(End of Act I)

———

1 Here it means Yaugandharayana.

# ACT II

## Interlude.

(The Palace of Mahasena in Ujjain)

(Enter the chamberlain, Badarayana)

*Chamberlain*: Abhiraka,[1] Abhiraka, go and tell the gate-keeper these words of Mahasena:—"The noble Jaivanti the preceptor of the king of Kasi,[2] has arrived here to-day on a mission. Let him be lodged comfortably, and not merely rendered the ordinary treatment accorded to the usual envoys. Every effort must be made to render him the hospitality due to an honoured guest". Ah, so it goes on from day to day. Embassies are sent by royal houses of exalted rank to ask for the hand of the Princess in marriage. But, Mahasena does not say "yes" or "no" to any one. Now, why is this? Surely, it is because Fate seems to have taken the matter of the Princess's marriage in its own hand. For,

That man who's destined to wed her,
His messenger has not yet come:
That's why our king does not bother
To discuss the merits of those come. (1)

The expression on the face of the servants here shows that the master is at hand. Ah, here comes Mahasena.

1. The messenger islnot on the stage.

2. Benares.

Here he comes from the grove of golden palms
Like Kartikeya[3] from the reed-forest;
Gold armlets encircle his sturdy arms,
And are with durva[4]-grass-like sapphires set. (2)

(Exit)

(End of the Interlude)

(Enter the King of Ujjain with his retinue)

King:

Countless kings on their coronets put
Humbly the dust from my charger's foot:
But, though all these are now my servants,
There'll be no end to my discontents
Till he, so proud of elephant lore,
The noble Vatsa, bows at my door. (3

Badarayana !

*Chamberlain*: Victory to Mahasena!

*King*: Is the noble Jaivanti properly lodged?

*Chamberlain*: Yes, lodged and suitably entertained.

*King*: You have done the proper thing. You are always zealous for the glory of our royal house. A fitting reception is accorded to all visitors. Now, one curious thing: every one I question about the marriage of the princess conceals his own opinion. (Looks at the chamberlain) You look as if you want to say something, Badarayana.

---

3 Skanda, the god of war. He is supposed to have emerged from a reed-forest.

4. A deep-bl gassu-e

*Badarayana*: It's nothing. Something about this marriage struck me.

*King*: Don't hesitate. This business concerns everybody. Speak out freely.

*Chamberlain*: Mahasena, this is what I want to say. Day after day, envoys are sent by royal houses of the proper rank to ask for the princess's hand. But your Majesty rejects none, and accepts none. Now, why is that?

*King*: Badarayana, this is how it is. I am so fond of Vasavadatta, and so anxious that the bridegroom should have all the best qualities, that I cannot make up my mind.

Of noble birth undoubtedly must he be:
Of heart tender and sympathetic to hers,
It's a gentle but powerful quality:
He must also have beauty, to avoid slurs
By ladies, though it's no virtue or safe guide:
Strong must he be to protect his youthful bride. (4)

*Chamberlain*: All these qualities will not be found combined in one person now, except in Mahasena.

*King*: That's what makes me undecided.

A father has to take the greatest care
To find a fitting mate for his daughter:
The rest depends on Fate; I' am not aware
Of any other rule in such affair. (5)

But, mothers always grieve when a daughter is given away in marriage. So, ask the queen to come here

*Chamberlain*: As your Majesty commands. (Exit)

*King*: This embassy from the King of Benares reminds me of Salankayana who went to capture the Vasta King. Another day, and no news from that Brahman.

No doubt, our plan was based on his favourite sport,
And our men sent out are skilled and dependable:
But all his ministers are zealous and able:
And will exert to th' utmost and give him support. (6)

(Enter the Queen with her retinue)

*Queen*: Victory to Mahasena!

*King*: Pray be seated.

*Queen*: As my lord commands (sits down).

*King*: where is Vasavadatta ?

*Queen*: She has gone to Uttara, a lady musician, for taking a lesson on the *Narada* lute.

*King*: How did she come to suddenly take to music like this ?

*Queen*: She saw her friend, Kanchanamala, playing on a lute, and wanted to learn it herself.

*King*: That's just like a girl.

*Queen*: There's something I was asked to tell you, Mahasena.

*King*: What is it ?

*Queen*: She would like to have a teacher, she says.

*King*: What does she want a teacher for, now that she is about to be married ? Let her husband teach her.

*Queen:* Oh, has the time really come for my little girl to get married and leave me?

*King:* Come, now, you are daily pestering me about her marriage with the words "It must be arranged." Why then are you distressed?

*Queen:* I am anxious to see her married, no doubt. It is the thought of separation from her that pains me. To whom is she to be married?

*King:* Nothing is settled yet.

*Queeu:* What, not yet?

*King:*

You're ashamed at the thought that she's not yet married,
And yet at the thought of her marriage, you're worried:
Caught betwixt the twin fires of love and dread duty,
A mother's heart's baked, and quivers with anxiety.
(7)

Vasavadatta has attained the proper age to attend on her father-in-law. And today there has come yet another envoy, the noble Jaivanti, preceptor to the King of Benares. I am rather attracted by his reputation. (to himselt) She says not a word. But she is agitated, and her eyes are full of tears. How can she come to any conclusion? Anyhow, I shall tell her about it. (aloud) As suitors for alliance with us, there are the kings...

*Queen:* Why all these details? Give her to such a one that we shall never have cause to rue the day.

*King:* Oh, yes, it is quite easy for you to say that now, leaving me to listen to your reproaches later on. This

is a difficult matter. So do make your own choice, my queen. Listen:—

The monarchs of Magadha, Kasi, Anga,
Surashtra, Mithila and Surasena.[5]
Are all suitors, and our decision await:
All these attract me by their qualities great:
I can't find out the best, though I rack my brain:
Who's most worthy, give your opinion plain. (8)

(Enter the chamberlain)

*Chamberlain*: The king of the Vatsas.

*King*: What about the king of the Vatsas ?

*Chamberlain*: Pardon, Your Majesty, pardon. In my haste to give you the good news, I forgot the court etiquette.[6]

*King*: What good news ?

*Queen:* (Rising) Long live the king !

*King*: (Joyfully) Don't you want to hear the good news my queen ? Pray, sit down.

*Queen*: As my lord commands (sits down).

*King*: (to chamberlain who has prostrated himself) Rise up and speak freely.

*Chamberlain*: (Rising) The king of the Vatsas has been captured by the honourable minister, Salankayana.

*King*: (Delighted) What did you say ?

*Chamberlain*: (Repeats) The king of the Vatsas has been captured by the honourable minister, Salankayana.

5. Behar, Benares, Bengal, Gujerat, Tirhut, Modern Muttra

6. He omits to say "Victory to Mahasena !" on entering.

*King*: Udayana ?

*Chamberlain*: Who else ?

*King*: Satanika's son ?

*Chamberlain*: Of course.

*King*: Sahasranika's grandson ?

*Chamberlain*: The very same.

*King*: The lord of Kausambi ?

*Chamberlain*: Yes.

*King*: The expert musician ?

*Chamberlain*: So they say.

*King*: Actually, the king of the Vatsas ?

*Chamberlain*: Yes, the king of the Vatsas, of course.

*King*: Is Yaugandharayana dead ?

*Chamberlain*: Not he. He is at Kausambi.

*King*: Then, I don't believe that the king of the Vatsas has been captured.

*Chamberlain*: Oh, yes; Your Majesty must believe me.

*King*:

I can no more believe that Vatsa's king is captive
Though you say it, than I can think that Mandara great.[7]
Was lifted on by you to your palm diminutive :
Foes say that his valour in war will never abate
Whatever the odds, and every one here praises
Yaugandharayana's strategy and devices. (9)

7 A legendary mountain, used as a churning-rod for churning the milky sea.

*Chamberlain*: Pardon me, Your Majesty. I am an old Brahman. I have never told your Majesty a lie.

*King*: That is so. Who is the welcome messenger Salankayana has sent?

*Chamberlain*: He has sent no messenger. The minister has come himself in the fastest chariot, with the Vatsa King.

*King*: Come himself! What joy! From to-day let the army lay the armour aside and rest at ease. From now on, kings will have no fear, and there will be no need of spies. In short, I have become Mahasena only to-day.

*Queen*: The minister has brought him here?

*Chamberlain*: Yes.

*Queen*: Then, we need not be in a hurry to affiance Vasavadatta to any one at present.

*King*: This man is my enemy, vanquished in battle, remember! Badarayana, where is Salankayana?

*Chamberlain*: He is waiting at the Auspicious Gate.

*King*: Go and tell Bharatarohaka to receive the minister with the honours due to a prince, and to bring him in with the Vatsa king in front of him.

*Chamberlain*: As Your Majesty commands.

*King*: Stay a moment.

*Chamberlain*: Yes.

*King*: Let none be prevented from seeing the Vatsa king.

Let the citizens one and all see my foe
Whom they, till now, by his deeds alone did know,
Let them see him, all fury now that he's caught,
Like an angry lion for sacrifice brought. (10)

*Chamberlain*: As Your Majesty commands. (Exit).

*Queen*: We have known several occasions of rejoicings in this royal house, but I do not remember ever having seen Mahasena so pleased before.

*King*: Nor do I remember ever hearing such good news as the capture of the Vatsa king.

*Queen*: It really is the king of the Vatsas ?

*King*: Why, of course.

*Queen:* I hear that many royal houses have sent messengers seeking an alliance with us. This prince alone has not sent a single messenger so far.

*King:* My queen, he ignores the very name, Mahasena, let alone desiring an alliance with us by marriage.

*Qeeun* Ignores your very name ! Is he a mere boy or an illiterate fool ?

*King*: He may be boyish, but he is certainly not an illiterate fool.

*Queen:* Then, what makes him so arrogant ?

*King*: Birth in the Bharata line of kings, with its long roll of Royal Sages and its tradition of Vedic learning, has made him proud. His unrivalled knowledge of music has increased his pride. His youthful beauty has turned his head. His subjects' remarkable attachment to him makes him over-confident.

*Queen*: Dear, dear, the very qualities one would desire in a son-in-law ! By what perversity has his disability arisen ?

*King*: My queen, how can you admire an unworthy object ?

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*Queen*: Dear, dear, the very qualities one would desire in a son-in-law ! By what perversity has his disability arisen ?

*King*: My queen, how can you admire an unworthy object ?

Listen:—

Like a forest fire burning ev'rywhere,
The fierce flames of my orders nowhere meet
A challenge till in Vatsa's realm they dare
To quench them, and my laws with jeerings greet. (11(

(Enter chamberlain)

*Chamberlain*: Victory to Mahasena ! Salankayana has been accorded an honourable reception, as commanded. He sends this message to your Majesty. "Here is that jewel of a lute, Ghoshavati, which used to be played by the Bharatas in Vatsaraja's family. Be pleased to accept it, O Mahasena". (shows the lute).

*King:* I accept it as an auspicious trophy of victory. (Takes it). So, this is the famous Ghoshavati, that lute,
Sweet to the ear, giving out bewitching tunes
When played with the nails glancing along the strings
Wild elephants' hearts are tamed by its fine runes
Ev'n as with a sage's magic words with wings. (12)

Ah, great is the joy derived from using, as we like, the treasures won in battle.

Gopalaka, my eldest son,
Is an adept in politics,
But 's innocent of poetics!
And Palaka, the younger one
Is a lover of athletics,
But love of music he has none.

So, to whom can I give this lute with profit ? (13)

Did you say, my queen, that Vasavadatta has taken ot the lute ?

*Queen*: Yes.

*King*: Then, give this to her.

*Queen*: If you give her this lute, she will be madder after the lute than ever.

*King*: Let her play on, play on ! It will not be so easy to play in her father-in-law's hou-e. Badarayana where is the princess ?

*Chamberlain*: She is with the minister.

*King*: And the king of Vatsa ?

*Chamberlain*: He had become so tractable, and had so many wounds on his feet and body, that he was carried into the Middle Palace on a litter.

*King*: I am sorry to hear that he has received so many wounds. This is the penalty he pays for his undaunted valour. In this state, it will be cruel to neglect him. Badarayana, go and ask Bharatarohaka to attend to the treatment of his wounds.

*Chamberlain*: As your Majesty commands.

*King*: Nay, wait a moment.

*Chamberlain*: I am waiting.

*King*: Every gesture of his should receive attention. His wishes should be inferred from his expression. There should be no reference to the fight, or his defeat, and a blessing should be utttered if he sneezes or does anything like that. The compliments should be tactful and suited to the occasions.

*Chamberlain:* As Your Majesty commands (goes and comes back). Victory to Mahasena ! The Vatsa king had his wounds dressed on the way. It is too soon, they say, to do a second dressing. The midday sun is at its height.

*King:* Where is that heroic warrior now ?

*Chamberlain:* Near the Peacocks' Perches.

*King:* Oh, fie ! That's no place to shelter in. Bid them take him into the Mosaic Room, so that he may be shielded from the sun.

*Chamberlain:* As Your Majesty commands (goes and comes back). Your Majesty's orders have been carried out. The minister Bharatarohaka desires an interview.

*King:* Evidently, he does not like this kind treatment of the Vatsa king. It goes against his policy. I shall bring him round to my views.

*Queen:* Is the marriage settled ?

*King:* No, not yet quite decided.

*Queen:* There is no need for hurry. My little girl is still quite a child.

*King:* As you please. You can go inside now.

*Queen:* As my lord commands. (Exit with retinue).

*King:* (Plunged in thought):

First his pride made me his foe; when he was taken
I was barely neutral; but now that I'm hearing
About his sorry plight, exhaustion in fighting,
And danger to life, I confess I am shaken. (14)

(Exeunt Omnes)

(End of ACT II).

# ACT III[1]

(A temple in Ujjain. Secret meeting of the jester and the two Ministers of Udayana in disguise.)

(Enter the Jester, disguised as a beggar.)

*Jester :* (gesticulating) What ! I kept my bowl of sweets[2] on the verandah of this temple and counted the gold pieces I got as gift along with it, and tied them up. Now I turn round, and I can't see my bowl of sweets (reflecting). That fellow was following me, but I gave him one sweetmeat, and he was satisfied, and has not followed me. The temple wall is too high for dogs to get in, and rob my sweets. The sweets were unbroken and just as they were cooked, and would not have attracted passers-by. Did I eat them myself ? Let me eructate and see. Ha ! Ha ! Nothing but wind comes from inside me, as from an old hog's bladder. Perhaps, Siva took my bowl of sweets thinking that it belonged to his consort, Katyayani, the goddess of this temple, and, so, to him. (more gestures.) This young celibate here[3] is reputed to play many pranks, assuming various forms. Did he take my bowl of sweets ? Let me have a look. Why, here's my bowl of sweets, at Siva,s

1 The first half of this Act uses a kind of cypher language having two meanings, one apparent and concerned with sweets, etc , the other deeper and concerned with the conspiracy. It is not very necessary for understanding the progress of the plot, as the second half makes everything clear. The main object of it is to provide rollicking fun, and also a kind of cross-word puzzle, as the same words are used in different senses.

2 Modaka-mallakam. Modakas are like small balls made with jaggery, cocoanut, flour, etc.

3. Ganesa, son of Siva.

feet ! I'll take it back. Give me, oh lord, my bowl of sweets. Oh, lord, thou art the thief of my sweets ! I say, owing to my distraction and grief, I could not see properly, and mistook this bowl of sweets painted on the wall to be my bowl of sweets. Well, I shall wipe out this painting. (wipes with his hands.) I say, this painter has done his work very well. The colours are so well laid on that the more I rub them off, the brighter they shine. Wait, I shall wash it off. Now, where am I to go for water ? Ah, here is a fine tank full of pure water. As I lost my bowl of sweets, let Siva lose his too !

(Behind the scene)

Sweets, sweets !

*Jester :* (to himself) Curse the fellow ! This madman has taken my bowl of sweets and is hurrying here, with his wretched laughter, like a foaming stream of muddy water rushing along the road after the rains. Stop, madman, stop, or I'll break your head with this stick.

(Enter Yaugandharayana disguised as a madman)

*Madman :* Sweets, sweets !

*Jester* : I say, madman, give back my bowl of sweets.

*Madman* : What sweets ? Where are they ? Whose sweets ?

Are those sweets thrown away or tied up or eaten ?

*Jester:* No, not eaten, nor thrown away.

*Madman:* My mouth is watering to eat them.

*Jester* : I say, madman, return my bowl of sweets. Don't clinglon to another's things and get locked up.

*Madman* : Who will lock me up ? The sweets will protect me.

Dressed in a special way, they give satisfaction;
Their price the king paid before his benefaction:
Firm, well-girt and seemly when they are new, they rot,
If kept for too long a time, and are, therefore, soft. (1)

*Jester* : I say, madman, return my bowl of sweets. I must go with them as provision to my master's house.

*Madman* : I must go a hundred leagues with them as provision.

*Jester* : What, are you Airavana, Indra's elephant ?[4]

*Madman* : Aye, I am Indra's elephant. Only, the king of the gods doesn't ride on my back now. I heard that Indra was bound with fetters. Then, with lightning lashes, which licked up the showers of rain, and rotating in a whirlwind, he burst the clouds that held him in bondage.

*Jester* : Oh, madman, won't you return my bowl of sweets ? Oh, I shall shout for help.

*Madman* : Shout as much as you like ! Scream ! Shout !

*Jester* : Help ! help ! sirs ! An outrage !

*Madman* : I, too, will shout for help. Indra is in bondage, sirs, Indra is in bondage !

*Jester* : Help ! help ! an outrage !

(Voice behind the scenes)

Fear not, good Brahman, fear not !

---

4. To go so far.

*Jester* : (Joyfully) When the moon appears, all the stars also come. To be a Brahman is to be low down now-a-days. A Buddhist monk, with his good works has to come and protect us, Brahmans.

(Enter Rumanvan disguised as a Buddhist monk)

*Monk* : Fear not, good Brahman, fear not! Who is there here? What's the matter? Why these shouts for help?

*Jester* : I say, this monk is playing the part of a gate-keeper and policeman. Good monk, this madman here has taken my bowl of sweets, and will not give it back to me.

*Monk* : Sweets! Let me see them.

*Madman* : See them, mister monk, see them! (shows them)

*Monk* : (sees them, and spits) Pooh! Pooh!

*Jester* : Oh, how unlucky I am! I have seen my sweets back again in the madman's hands only for them to be spat on by this monk with his good works.

*Monk* : Oh, good madman, return, oh return, those sweets which are white as the foam on bubbling water, large and soft, made with many powders, and with oozing juice resembling toddy. Don't eat them lest they make you die of consumption!

*Jester* : Curse the fellows, they have given me toddy-shop *laddus* for sweets!

*Monk* : Return them, madman, return them, I say. If not, I shall curse you.

*Madman* : Gently, monk. Don't curse me. (To Jester) Take them.

*Monk* : Reverend Brahman, see my power!

*Jester :* The madman sees that the monk is about to curse him, and at once stands trembling with fear, holding my bowl of sweets at his finger-tips for delivering it to me. Good madman, give me back my bowl of sweets!

*Monk*: Come, sir, come. For giving you the sweets, you shall give me a blessing.

*Jester :* Ha! Ha! Give you a blessing for my own sweets! I accepted them as a gift from a householder. I shall give them to you, too. May you be prosperous! This madman is going towards the Fire Shrine. It is mid-day. This place will become deserted even before noon. I shall just go and keep the gold pieces I got as gift, in a house by the way. One man wants my cloth, another my money.

(The three enter the Fire Shrine.)

*Yaugandharayana :* Vasantaka, is this shrine empty?

*Jester :* Yes, sir, quite.

*Yaugandharayana :* Then, let us embrace.

*Both :* Good. (They embrace.)

*Yaugandharayana* : Both of you have exerted yourselves well. Sit down; you too.

*Both* : All right.

(All the three sit down.)

*Yaugandharayana* : Vasantaka, have you seen the king?

*Jester* : Yes, sir, I have seen His Majesty.

*Yaugandharayana :* Alas, there is no security at night.

That is why we have to wait and meet in day time.
The day is gone, and we look forward to the night.
The bright dawn comes, and we look forward to the day:
As time passes thus, we've, in our troubles, to sight.
Advantages yet to come, as best as we may. (2)

*Rumanvan:* Well said! But, though day and night are, in theory, equal, the night is full of difficulties:—

The night's a terror to all those foes
Who cannot succeed in enterprise,
Or are not popular, for their woes
And errors the morning rays apprise. (3)

*Yaugandharayana:* Did you speak with the king?

*Jester:* Yes, sir. His Majesty kept me a long time. To-day is the fourteenth day of the fortnight, and I attended on him as he took his bath.

*Yaugandharayana:* Has he taken his bath?

*Jester:* Yes, His Majesty has bathed.

*Yaugandharayana:* Did he worship the gods?

*Jester:* Yes, but with a mere obeisance only.

*Yaugandharayana:* It is good to hear that the king has reached this state of convalescence. But,

The drums should beat, as of yore, when he bathes and prays,
Now, alas, his fetters clank on auspicious days
When he bathes and goes and bows before the deities
Fate alone is to blame for these improprieties. (4)

*Rumanvan:* Your efforts will soon make it possible for the king to worship on the auspicious days as of yore.

*Yaugandharayana*: Vasantaka, go and see the king once more, and give him this message from me. "The plan discussed by us for our departure from this place must be carried out to-morrow. The elephant Nalagiri will be infuriated in the good old way, with charms and herbs. We have found opportunities to put the herbs close to where he is tied up, and where he takes his bath, has his feed, and lies down. We have arranged to start the fire and set the fumes going when the wind is blowing in the right direction. To increase his rage, we have caused the elephants opposite to it to be in ruts. A house near the stables, with no articles in it, is to be set on fire, for elephants, as you know, are so terribly afraid of fire. Conches and drums have been placed in the temples, and will be made to raise a great noise, increasing the terror of the elephants. With all that din, to be caused by our devices to-morrow, Pradyota is sure to seek your aid. So, with the concurrence of our foe, you can come out of the prison, taking the lute, which shares your captivity and sorrow, and subdue Nalagiri. Then, firmly seated on its back,

The great tusker should be driven so hot
That troops can pursue it only in thought.
When crossing the Vindhyas, lions will roar,
You must cross the range ere the roars are o'er;
Do three things in three places the same day,
In jail, in forest, and your city gay.
You will escape, my king, as you were caught,
By an elephant trick, of better sort." (5)

*Rumanvan*: What are you thinking about, Vasantaka?

*Jester:* I am thinking that all your immense efforts are in vain.

*Yaugandharayana* and *Rumanvan*: We don't follow you at all.

*Jester :* Sirs, I understand my thoughts first, and you next.

*Yaugandharavana*: Why should our plan fail?

*Jester* : Because of the opinionatedness of Vatsaraja.

*Yaugandharayana* : What do you mean ?

*Jester* : You both listen to me.

*Both Ministers* : We are all attention.

*Jester :* When the eighth day of the last dark fortnight was over, the princes Vasavadatta went to worship at the temple of the Yakshini[5] opposite the prison gate accompanied by her nurse. She was in an open palanquin, being an unmarried woman who could be seen by all freely. They had to skirt a high road which was flooded by water from a choked-up drain.

*Yaugandharayana :* Go on.

*Jester :* That very day, the king happened to be outside the prison gates, with the permission of the jail superintendent, Sivaka.

*Yaugandharayana* : Well ?

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5. A sylph or fairy; attendant on Durga or Parvati and holding intercourse with mortals.

*Jester*: The palanquin was halted near the prison gate for the men to change shoulders, and the king saw the princess as plainly as he liked.

*Yaugandharayana*: What then?

*Jester*: What then? Why, the prison became for him paradise itself, and he began to make love to her.

*Yaugandharayana*: But, surely, the king cannot have fallen in love with her.

*Jester*: That's exactly what he has done, sir. Troubles come in shoals.

*Yaugandharayana*: Friend, Rumanvan, steel your heart. We shall have to grow old in these disguises.

*Jester*: Sir, our master said to me "Tell Yaugandharayana, 'I don't like your present plan. I am thinking of a particularly telling insult to Pradyota at the very moment of my departure. Don't think I am blinded by passion. I am only seeking a telling return for by humiliation.' "

*Yaugandharayana*: What a speech is this, fit to be ridiculed by his foes! What consummate cheek! How grievous and distressing to friends! The king wants joys and delights at the wrong time and place. Fie!

He can still be proud though on bare earth he lies
On a bed of straw prepared with his own hands:
He can make love though chains of tremendous size
Jingle on his feet: all this one understands!
When warders deputed to guard him in jail
Callthm king, why should he, in making love, fail? (5)

*Jester*: We have shown our devotion towards him, sir. We have done our very best. Let us now leave him to his fate and go home.

*Yaugandharayana*: Is it Vasantaka who talks thus? Oh, Vasantaka, you should not talk like that,

How can we abandon him
Who knows not good times from bad,
Who depends on us, his friends,
Whose eyes love and sorrow dim,
Whose heart is for ever sad,
And cannot grasp the true trends. (7)

*Jester*: All right, then. We shall go on spending our days here like this till old age.

*Yaugandharayana*: That will be most praiseworthy.

*Jester*: It might be if people knew why we were doing so.

*Yaugandharayana*: We do nothing to please the world. We do things only for our master's sake.

*Jester*: Even he does not realise our sacrifice.

*Yaugandharayana*: In course of time, he will.

*Jester*: When will that time come?

*Yaugandharayana*: When our plans succeed.

*Jester*: Then, you must be able to take the king out of the prison and the princess out of the inner apartments of the palace.

*Rumanvan*: You have put it neatly. (To Yaugandharayana). You must see to these two things.

*Yaugandharayana*: Both? Very well, here is my second vow.[6]

Even as Arjuna great took Subhadra,
Ev'n as an elephant uproots lotus stalks,
If Vatsa's king takes not Vasavadatta,
It is not Yaugandharayana who talks! (8)

And again:—

If the long-eyed maiden and the king
I to Kausambi do not take away
From here, then I am not, mark the thing,
Yaugandharayana, I boldly say. (9)

(Listens). I hear some noise. See what it is.

*Jester*: Very well, sir. (goes and comes back). People have begun to stroll about in knots, enjoying the evening air.

*Rumanvan*: There are four doors to this Fire Shrine. Let us break our assembly.

*Yaugandharayana*: Oh, no, not our assembly. Let us break up the assembly of our foes. We must all play our allotted parts well.

*Both*: All right (exeunt).

*Madman*: The Demon Rahu is swallowing the moon. Leave the moon, I say. If you don't, I shall hit you on the mouth, split it, and release the moon. Look here's a mad horse running loose. Now he has reached the cross-roads. I shall mount him and eat my food, Here are the little masters. Beat me, masters. No.

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6 This is his second vow.

don't beat me. What do you say? That you want me to dance a little for you? Look, little masters, look. Oh, little masters, beat me once more with your sticks. No, don't you beat me, or I too will beat you.

(Exit).

(End of the Third Act).

# ACT IV

## Interlude.

(Ujjain)

(ENTER A SOLDIER OF MAHASENA).

*Soldier*: (to himself) The princess Vasavadatta wants to go bathing. But I have not been able yet to trace Gatrasevaka, the mahout of her elephant, Bhadravati. I say Pushpadantaka, I cannot find Gatrasevaka. What do you say? That he has gone to the tavern and is drinking liquor? All right, you can go (walks round). Here is the the tavern. I shall just call him. (aloud) Gatrasevaka! Gatrasevaka!

(Voice behind the Scene.)

Now, who is calling me "Gatrasevaka, Gatrasevaka!" from the high road?

*Soldier*: Here is Gatrasevaka coming, full of liquor, laughing loudly, dead drunk, and with eyes red as China roses. I shall not stand in his path now (moves aside)

*Gatrasevaka*: Now, who is this calling me "Gatrasevaka, Gatrasevaka!" from the high road? My father-in-law saw me when I came out of the liquor-shop, and very angry was he. But, oh, that morsel of meat, well-seasoned with ghee, pepper and salt, was cramped into my mouth by me along with a jug of fine liquor, When my daughter-in-law is drunk, she falls in love

with me, but then her mother-in-law takes up the stick to beat me.

Blessed the folk dead drunk with spirits,
Blessed they too with the liquor stink:
Blessed are those with such great merits,
That they bathe in drink and die of drink ! (1)

Wretched are those rich fools who see the misery of their daughters-in-law and yet do not turn to a cask of liquor for relief. So, I know whether there is a hell or not in the world of Yama.[1]

*Soldier*: (Approaching) Ho, Gatrasevaka, how long have I been looking for you ! The princess Vasavadatta wants to go bathing, and her elephant Bhadravati is not to be seen. You are drunk and loafing about here.

*Gatrasevaka*: That is right. She is drunk, her man is drunk, I am drunk, you are drunk, everything in the world is drunk.

*Soldier*: Never mind about everything being drunk. Why are you loafing about here, and why have you not brought Bhadravati ?

*Gatrasevaka*: Here I loaf about, here I drink, with this I drink. Don't get angry. What is to be done?

*Soldier*: Stop this nonsensical talk ! Bring Bhadravati at, once.

*Gatrasevaka*: Let her come. Aye, Bhadravati, come ! Alas, I have pledged her goad !

1 The other world. Yama is the Lord of the Dead.

*Soldier*: What do you want a goad for? The gentle Bhadravati does not need it. Go and bring her at once.

*Gatrasevaka*: Let her come. Aye, Bhadravati, come! Alas I have pawned her half-moon necklet.

*Soldier*: It does'nt matter. We can put a flower garland on her. Bring Bhadravati at once.

*Gatrasevaka*: Let her come. Aye, Bhadravati, come! Alas, I have pledged her bell.

*Soldier*: The elephant is going to enter the water. The bell is unnecessary. Bring Bhadravati at once.

*Gatrasevaka*: Let her come. Aye, Bhadravati, come: Alas I have pledged her whip!

*Soldier*: A whip is unnecessary for Bhadravati. Bring her at once, man!

*Gatrasevaka*: Yes, I will. Aye, Bhadravati, come! Alas!

*Soldier*: Aye, what now?

*Gatrasevaka*: Alas, I have......

*Soldier*: What have you done?

*Gatrasevaka*: Alas, Bhadra......

*Soldier*: What about Bhadra?

*Gatrasevaka*: Alas, Bhadravati,

*Soldier*: What about Bhadravati?

*Gatrasevaka*: I've pawned Bhadravati, too,

*Soldier*: It's not your fault. It is the fault of this liquor-shop-keeper who has dared to take a pledge of the king's elephant for his liquor!

*Gatrasevaka*: Alas, I told him, 'don't lose the interest on your capital!'

*Soldier* : I say, did you hear that noise?

*Gatrasevaka* : Alas, I know what it is. Bhadravati is breaking out of the liquor-shop-keeper's house and running away!

*Soldier* : What do you say ?

(*Voice in the air*)

That the king of the Vatsas has escaped, taking the princess Vasavadatta with him ?

*Gatrasevaka ;* (joyfully) May my master meet with no obstacles !

*Soldier:* Now, you may drink and loaf about as tipsy as you like !

*Gatrasevaka* : Hey, who is drunk ? And with what, joy or liquor ? Who is intoxicated, my man ? Know that we are all spies, each stationed in his place by Yaugandharayana. Here, I am giving a signal to my friends. See, there they are running about like king cobras that have cast off their sloughs. Oh, my friends, listen to my words :—

Her who eats his master's food and will not fight
Fohim, let that wretch ne'er get holy water
With its coat of sacred *darbha* grass, or sight
Of Heaven, but gŏ straight to Hell, the rotter ! (2)

But, where is the noble Yaugandharayana ? Ah, there he is!

Abandoning his madman's guise,
Armed with sharp sword and golden shield,
Wearing raiments and turban nice,

He looks on this great battle-field
Like a cloud well charged with lighting
And with the moon through it whit'ning (3)

Oh! A big fight is in progress!

He slays many elephants and their drivers,
Num'rous heroes on foot, horses with riders;
He plunges boldly into that mighty host,
In the spirit of bravery, not of boast.
Though his sword is broken by elephant's tusk,
He draws not his foot back, but will fight till dusk! (4)

Alas, he is captured, the noble Yaugandharayana! I must go to him, and be by his side now (*Exit*).

*Soldier*: What is all this? All Kausambi seems to be here, except the wall and the ornamental gate. Well, I'll go and tell the ministers about this thing. (*Exit*)

(*End of the Interlude.*)

(Enter two orderlies).

*Both together*: Make way, sirs, make way!

*First*: Ugh! My throat is about to split, and yet the shout does not seem to be loud euough for this crowd.

*Second*: Alas, owing to this mad excitement over the abduction of the princess Vasavadatta, nobody hears me, however loudly I shout. What do you say? Why we are asking people, to make way? Yaugandharayana has been taken prisoner. You ask how he was taken? Listen. For a time, with nothing but his sword, he made our army stand at bay, and checked

its fierce onrush. But, the elephant Vijayasundara broke his sword by striking it with the tip of his tusk. So, he was captured, because of the defect in the sword, not because of any defect in the man.

*First*: I say, better be careful. All Kausambi is here, except the wall and the ornamental gate.

*Both together*: Get down, sir, get down.

(Enter Yaugandharayana, carried on a plank bed and with his hands tied).

*Yaugandharayana*: Here I am.

Though I'm captured, it's by mere loss of arm,
I've rescued Vatsaraja from his foes,
And freed him from all his troubles and woes,
Here I come, victorious, happy and calm. (5)

Ho! It is easy, sirs, for those without wives to go and live in the forest. Affliction is easily borne by those who have had their hearts' desire fulfilled. Death has no terror for those who have stored up merit.

Recking not enmity, fear and insult alike,
I've succeeded by deep designs, tact and valour;
The enemies' glory I have ended for good,
My friends' disgrace too I have removed, as I should:
My king is free, and my victory is secure,
I did by today's acts my fame and name ensure. (6)

*Both*: Make way, sirs, make way!

*Yaugandharayana*: Don't ask people who want to see me to make way.

Let the servants of your king, all and sundry,
Desiring to be ministers of the State,
Come and see me and realise that my fate
Is due to devotion to king and country.

This will make them fit themselves for the hard task,
Or drop the desire in king's favour to bask. (7)

*Both*: Make way, sirs, make way! Haven't you seen Yaugandharayana before?

*Yaugandharayana*: They have seen me before, but not thus.

Save as madman, with figure contemptible,
Running along the streets, they have not seen me.
Now that I have done a few deeds notable,
Let those who want to see me do so freely! (8)

(*Enter the soldier.*)

*Soldier:* Good news for you, sir. The king of the Vatsas has been taken prisoner.

*Yaugandharayana*: Oh, no. That cannot be.
Freed from prison in the city of the foe,
He mounted famous Bhadravati, you know,
And entered the forests, gaining league on league,
As moments passed; so, your news does me intrigue. (9)

Did you hear, my good sir, how he was captured?

*Soldier*: He was pursued on Nalagiri and caught.

*Yaugandharayana*: The elephant, no doubt, could have done it, but, thank god, he is not properly manned.

A tusker's speed's by training drawn out
By its long-experienced rider;
None can ride this one or take him out
Since he was left by Vatsa's ruler. (10)

*Soldier*: Sir, the minister says that you are to be kept in the arsenal. That place is well guarded by our men.

*Yaugandharayana*: What a ridiculous order!

When keeping the fire, our king, in custody,
Your ministers slept, and were not once awake;
When the jewels has been stolen already,
O'er the empty casket, what pains do they take! (11)

(*They walk round.*)

*Soldier*: Here is the arsenal, sir. Please enter, sir.

(*Enter another soldier.*)

*Second soldier*: (to the orderlies) The minister's orders! Remove his chains!

*Yaugandharayana*: Yes, give me that much relief. Evidently, Bharatarohaka wants to see me. And I too want to see him.

He is depressed at my words and success;
His defeat began when my schemes started;
The treatises gave him no good counsels;
No counter schemes of his have me thwarted;
Defeated by my keen intelligence,
His face is hanging down with burning shame;
Like a wrestler knocked down throughout the lines,
He is mad with anger and hates my fame. (12)

(*Enter Bharatarohaka.*)

*Bharatarohaka*: Where is he, where is Yaugandharayana? (to himself).

He carried out his duty by deception,
But it's painful to look at him in this state:
How upbraid him when he's ruined by devotion
For his master and has come by this dire fate?
His plans were all well-laid, and, though long hindered,
He carried on and kept on raising his head
Like an angry snake, caught and overpowered,
And put in basket, but with prowess unshed. (14)

*Soldier*: Yaugandharayana is awaiting you, sir, in the arsenal.

*Bharatarohaka*: All right.

He's waiting to reproach me with my hostile act
When with that blue elephant I his skill side-tracked.

*Soldier*: (to Yaugandharayana) Sir, here is the minister.

*Bharatarohaka*: (approaching) Hail, Yaugandharayana!

*Yaugandharayana*: Hail!

*Soldier*: Oh, what a resounding voice! The whole place is filled with that one word.

*Bharatarohaka*: (sitting down) The name "Yaugandharayana" was familiar to me, sir, till now, but not the man. Now, I am delighted to see you in flesh and blood.

*Yaugandharayana*: Delighted to see me, you say. Aye, gaze at me!

My limbs, you see, are smeared with blood, like a soldier's.
As they should be after a fight, but I am calm
Like Drona's son after he had avenged his sire's
Murder by killing the slayer without a qualm. (15)

*Bharatarohaka*: You succeeded by means of your trickery with an elephant. Is this self-praise too necessary?

*Yaugandharayana*: It is amusing to hear *you* talk of trickery.

What of the elephant set up to trick us
Under the *sal* and mallik trees, without fuss?
What of our king lying helpless on the ground
Using his arm as pillow, with creepers bound?
Now it is fraud forsooth when he charms with lute
Your great elephant and effects his escape!
I but follow your lead, and you must be mute
Though you see my great triumph and can but gape (16)

*Bharatarohaka*: But, surely, Yaugandharayana, it was not robbery worthy of your king to take the daughter of Mahasena as a pupil and then carry her off, without marrying her with fire as witness.

*Yaugandharayana*: Oh, no, don't say so. My master has already married her.

Born in the famous Bharata race,
Lord of all the Vatsa and their fate,
He would never see a maiden's face,
Or teach her, till he made her his mate. (17)

*Bharatarohaka*: Then again, why was your master ungrateful to Mahasena for all the kindness shown to him?

*Yaugandharayana*: Oh, don't speak in that strain.

Nalagiri will only Vatsa obey,
Control over him none else claims or pretends;
He ran amok, and the panic to allay,
And to save the life of himself and his friends
Your master liberated mine, we all know,
So, your claims to our gratitude are hollow. (18)

*Bharatarohaka*: If he was only released for capturing Nalagiri, as you claim, why was your master not imprisoned afterwards?

*Yaugandharayana*: Because your master was afraid of being charged with ingratitude.

*Bharatarohaka*: It is said, sir, that you are deeply learned in the science of politics. What does it prescribe for enemies defeated and captured in battle?

*Yaugandharayana*: Death.

*Bharatarohaka*: If, then, Vatsaraja deserved death, why did we not kill him, and why did we treat him well?

*Yaugandharayana*: You treated him well because you wanted him to treat your king well, and not to carry him off.

*Bharatarohaka*: Your master thought that even this was possible?

*Yaugandharayana*: What doubt is there?

Your king was in the hollow of his hand,
But my king, ever virtuous, spared him.
He rides the lord of elephants off-hand,
And can make standards fall when it suits him. (19)

*Bharatarohaka*: Very well. But when planning all these hostile acts against Mahasena, did you think for a moment what would become of Kausambi ?

*Yaugandharayana*: Oh, what a ridiculous question !

He has escaped from under your very nose,
Why should I worry about things hereafter ?
When the tree has been cut as its root and source,
The branches cannot be any great matter. (20)

(Enter the chamberlain)

*Chamberlain*: (whispers to Bharatarohaka) That's how it is.

*Bharatarohaka*: Say it aloud.

*Chamberlain*:

"You've done no real wrong, though you used many wiles;
We like your qualities. though victims of your guiles;
So, forget these events, and accept this chalice,
As guest's present, from us who bear you no malice". (21)

That's Mahasena's message.

*Yaugandharayana*: Ah, me !

The houses I set fire to are still burning,
So must be all the Ujjain minister's hearts.
This honour shown to one well worth punishing
Resembles lingering death with poison darts. (22)

(Lamentations are heard from behind the scenes)

*Bharatarohaka*: Ah !

What is this sudden cry of sorrow
Coming from the palace top storey,

Like that of the wee little sparrow
Struck by the cruel falcon gory ? (32)

Go and find out what it is.

*Chamberlain*: As you order, sir. (goes and comes back) Queen Angaravati, overcome with grief, wanted to commit suicide by falling down from the top storey of the palace. But Mahasena said to her "Your daughter's marriage has been performed according the laws of Kshatriyas. Why do you grieve at this time of joy ? Let us celebrate the marriage ceremony of Vasavadatta; and Vatsaraja, in effigy, with their painting". So,

All of a sudden, women are now performing
The marriage rites in disorder in their delight,
The things used for luck, with their tears, they are wetting
Tears shed by them in joy reaching its very height. (24)

*Yaugandharayana*: So, Mahasena, too, has accepted it as an alliance by marriage. Come, give me the chalice now.

*Chamberlain*: Pray, accept it (gives it).

*Bharatarohaka*: What more should Mahasena do for you, sir ?

*Yaugandharayana*: I desire nothing more than that Mahasena should always be pleased with me.

*Epilogue.*

May cows ev'rywhere be happy,
May our lion-like king beat his foes !

And subduing their sovereignty
Rule the whole earth freed from all woes!

(End of Act IV)

*End of "Yaugandharayana's Vows".*

# SVAPNA VASAVADATTA

OR

# THE VISION OF VASAVADATTA

## CHARACTERS

*Men.*

*Udayana.* King of Vatsa.

*Yaugandharayana*: His chief minister, appearing also in the disguise of a hermit.

*The Jester*: Vasantaka, the confidant of Udayana.

*A student of Theology.*

*Badarayana*: The chamberlain of King Pradyota Mahasena of Ujjain.

The chamberlain of Magadha.

The chamberlain of the King of Vatsa.

Two guards, one of whom is called Sambhashaka.

*Stage-Director*:

*Women*:

*Vasavadatta*: Princess of Ujjain, daughter of King Pradyota Mahasena, supposed to have been burnt alive at Lavanaka, and brought to Raja-griha, and made to live in the Magadhan palace under the name of "Avantika".

*Padmavati*: Sister of Darsaka, King of Magadha, and second queen of Udayana.

*A hermit Woman.*

*Padminika and Madhukarika.* Maids of honour attending on Padmavati.

*Vijaya*: Female door-keeper at the Kausambi Palace.

*Vasundhara*: Nurse of Vasavadatta.

*Nurse of Padmavati.*

Maids, Attendants, etc.

Important characters referred to, but not appearing, in the play.

*Men:—*

*Darsaka:* King of Magadha.
*Mahasena:* King of Avanti.
*Aruni:* Usurper of Vatsa.

*Women:—*

Queen mother of Magadha.
Queen of Magadha.
*Angaravati:* Mahasena's queen.

*Prelude.*

(AT THE END OF THE OPENING, ENTER THE STAGE DIRECTOR.)

*Stage Director*:

May Lord Balarama[1] protect thee, king of men,[2]
With his arms of the colour of the rising Moon[3]
Flushed with wine,[4] incarnate beauty past ken,
Thrilled with the joy of this Spring filled with ev'ry boon![5] (1)

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1 Elder brother of Sri Krishna. At one time, he was widely worshipped. Now his temples are few. There is one in South Travancore.

2 Evidently, addressed to the king who is present at the theatre.

3 He is ruddy-white; Krishna, of course, is black.

4 He is fond of wine.

5 By paronomasia, the dramatist very cleverly introduces the names of Udayana, Vasavadatta, Padmavati, and Vasantaka, the principal persons in the play, by putting in words applicable to the gods and these.

I have the honour to announce to the assembled gentlemen here as follows:—Hey, what now? Even as I am about to make the announcement, I think I hear a noise. Well, let me find out what it is.

(Behind the scenes)

Make way, sirs, make way, sirs, make way!

*Stage Director*: Ah, now I understand:—

Zealous servants of Magadha's[6] king
Escort their princess, and turn away
without a second thought those walking
Ev'n on this sequestered hermits' way. (2)

(Exit)

(Prelude ends here)

# ACT I

( A FOREST ROAD NEAR A HERMITAGE. )

(Enter two guards).

*Guards*: Make way, sirs, make way!

(Enter Yaugandharayana in the disguise of a wandering religious mendicant, and Vasavadatta disguised as Avantika).[7]

*Yaugandharayana*: (listens) What? Even here people are being pushed aside!

Clad in barks aud eating forest fruits,
Reverend sages come here and dwell,

6 Modern Behar.

7 "Lady cf Avanti". Here, she is shown as a Brahman middle class woman.

Who is this fellow, the worst of brutes,
Made insolent by chance fortune's swell,
Who insults these venerable folk,
By imposing here the townsmen's yoke,
And makes this great penance grove tranquil
A city street by his orders shrill ?

*Vasavadatta*: Sir, who is this that turns people away from the path ?

*Yaugandharayana*: Lady, one who, by doing so, turns himself away from the path of Righteousness.

*Vasavadatta*: Sir, I did not mean that. Can even I be ordered to make way ?

*Yaugandharayana* : Lady, even gods when not recognized, are insulted thus.

*Vasavadatta* : Sir, the fatigue of the journey has not caused me as much pain as this insult.

*Yaugandharayana* ; Why, this kind of thing was once done for you and is now discarded by you. You shouldn't bother about this. For,

Once you too had your heart's fill of these pomps and shows:
When your lord's victorious, you'll have them again:
The wheel of fortune turns with Time, a wise man knows,
And all regrets about its actions are in vain. (4)

*The two guards* : Make way, sirs, make way,

(Enter the chamberlain)

*Chamberlain* : (to one of the guards) Now, now, Sambhashaka, you should not ask people here to make way, Look you,

Bring not to shame the name of our lord the king,
By harsh usage of folk in this hermitage,
It's to be free from all such city hustling
That great souls come here, to a forest cottage. (5)

*The two guards*: All right, sir. (Retire).

*Yaugandharayana*: Ah, he has good discernment. My child, let us approach him.

*Vasavadatta*: As you please, sir.

*Yaugandharayana*: (approaching the chamberlain) Sir, why are people being turned away?

*Chamberlain*: O good hermit!

*Yaugandharayana*: (to himself) "Hermit" is an honourable form of address, no doubt, but, being unfamiliar to me, it does not appeal to me so much.

*Chamberlain*: Listen, sir. This lady here is the sister of our great king who has been named Darsaka by his parents. She has come on a visit to the Queen-Mother Mahadevi, who has made this hermitage her home. Taking leave of her, she will go back to Rajagriha.[1] To-day she is pleased to stay in this hermitage. But,

Go ye freely into the forest and bring
Holy water, faggots, flowers and grasses:
Nothing pleases this fair daughter of your king
More than piety of the hermit classes:
She obeys the law, like all her royal race,
And against all breaches thereof sets her face. (6)

*Yaugandharayana*: (to himself) So, this is Padmavati, the Princess of Magadha, about whom the astrologers, Push-

1 Ancient capital of Māgadha: Modern Rajgir.

paka, Bhadraka, and others have predicted that she will wed my royal master. See,

We esteem or hate as our desires dictate;
I want her to wed my king and save the State;
So I feel for her a great devotion,
As I see her free Vatsa from commotion. (7)

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) After hearing that she is the daughter of a King. I feel for her almost a sisterly affection.

(Enter Padmavati with her retinue and a maid)

*Maid*: This way, princess, this way. Here is the hermit-age. Be pleased to enter.

(A woman hermit is found seated at the entrance.)

*Woman Hermit*: Princess you are most welcome.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) So, this is the Princess. Her looks proclaim her noble birth.

*Padmavati*: (to woman hermit) Reverend lady, I salute you.

*Woman Hermit*: Long life to thee! Come in, child, come in. A hermitage is, indeed, like one's own home to wayfarers.

*Padmavati*: So it is, your reverence. I feel quite at home and am grateful to you for these words of affectionate welcome.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) She is not merely charming in appearance; her words are equally sweet.

*Woman Hermit*; (to the maid) My dear, has no king yet applied for the hand of this sister of our gracious king?

*Maid*: King Pradyota of Ujjain has sent ambassadors to ask for her hand for his son.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Well, well, she has now become one of my own people ![1]

*Woman Hermit*: She well deserves this honour, by her beauty. We have heard that both are very exalted royal families.

*Padmavati*: (to chamberlain) Sir, have you found any hermits that will favour us by accepting our gifts? Invite all the hermits here, for giving them according to their hearts' desire, and ask them "Does anybody want anything"?

*Chamberlain*: As you wish, lady. (calls out) Oh, ascetics inhabiting this sacred grove, kindly listen to my words. Her Highness, the Princess of Magadha, is gratified by your affectionate welcome, and invites all of you to come here and accept her gifts so that she may discharge her religious duty and gain merit.

Is there one who wants a pitcher?
Come here those who seek a garment!
Those who have had investiture,
Freely ask for teacher's present!
Here's the friend of all the pious,
The princess, only too anxious
For you to speak out your demands
To issue to me her commands.
What can she give now to please you,
And to whom, kindly bethink you.

1 As she is expected to wed her brother.

She'll deem it a special favour
If she can lighten your labour. (8)

*Yaugandharayana*: (to himself) Ah, I see my opportunity (Aloud) Sir, I want a favour.

*Padmavati:* I am happy that my visit to this hermitage has borne fruit.

*Hermit Woman*: (to herself) Every ascetic in this hermitage is contented, and wants nothing. This must be some stranger.

*Chamberlain*: What can we do for you, sir?

*Yaugandharayana*: (pointing to Vasavadatta) This is my sister. Her husband has gone abroad. It will be a great favour to me if Her Highness will take care of her for some time. For,

I seek not riches, raiments, pleasure,
I turned not hermit for a living;
This royal maid's wise beyond measure,
With her I can have no misgiving:
She knows well the straight path of duty,
Let her guard my sister, a beauty. (9)

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Hm! The noble Yaugandharayana desires to leave me here. Let it be. He will never do anything without thinking it over well.

*Chamberlain*: Lady, his expectation soars high indeed. How can we consent? For,

Easy it is to part with treasure,
Or life itself, or hard-earned penance,
Easy is aught else in like measure,
But watching a ward with vigilance! (10)

*Padmavati*: Having first proclaimed "Does anybody want anything ?", it is improper now to hestitate. Pray do as he wants, sir.

*Chamberlain*: These words are worthy of your Highness.

*Maid*: Long live the princess who thus keeps her word !

*Woman Hermit*: Long life to thee, my dear !

*Chamberlain*: All right, my lady. (Approaches Yaugandharayana). Sir, Her Highness, accepts the guardianship of your honour's sister.

*Yaugandharayana*: I am highly indebted to her Highness. (to Vasavadatta) Approach Her Highness, child.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) What is to be done ? I shall go, unlucky that I am !

*Padmavati*: Well, she has now become ours.

*Woman Hermit*: Judging by her looks, she too seems to me to be a princess.

*Maid*: You are right, reverend lady. I too think that she has seen far better days.

*Yaugandharayana*: (to himself) Ah, half my task is finished. It has come off just as I planned with the other ministers. And when my lord is reinstated on his throne, and Vasavadatta is restored to him, the Princess of Magadha will bear witness to her good conduct, and be my surety for it. For,

The seers who foretold our king's eclipse
Said he would wed Padmavati too,
I've acted on these words from their lips,
Sure that Fate would ne'er make them untrue. (11)

(Enter a student of theology)

*Student*: (looking upward). It is midday, and I am dead tired. Where shall I rest? (walks round). Ah, this must be a hermitage. For,

Unperturbed and serene the fawns graze here,
Sure of their ground, and with no trace of fear:
The trees are all nurtured with love and care,
Their branches groan with fruits and flowers rare;
Here are those famous herds of tawny kine;
And no trace of the plough till the sky-line;
From here and there are rising high smokes mauve,
I am sure this must be a hermits' grove. (12)

I'll enter. (He enters, and sees the chamberlain). Hullo, this man here does not fit in with a hermitage. (looks in another direction) But there are hermits also. So, there is no harm in proceeding further. Oh, but there are women here!

*Chamberlain*: Come in freely, sir. A hermitage is common to one and all.

*Vasavadatta*: Humph!

*Padmavati*: (to herself) Ah, this lady avoids the sight of strangers. Well, it will not be difficult to look after my charge.

*Chamberlain*: Sir, we were here before you. Pray, accept from us the hospitality due to a guest. (gives some water).

*Student*: (after a ceremonial sip of water) Enough' enough. My weariness has gone.

*Yaugandharayaua*: Sir, where are you coming from? Whither are you going? Which is your native place?

*Student*: Listen, sir. I am a native of Rajagriha. To specialise in Vedic studies, I was residing in the village of Lavanaka in the land of Vatsa.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Lavanaka! The very name Lavanaka revives my old agony.

*Yaugandharayaua*: And have you finished your course of studies?

*Student*: No, not yet.

*Yaugandharayana*: If you have not finished your studies why did you leave the place?

*Student*: A terrible calamity occurred there.

*Yaugandharayana*: What was that?

*Student*: There was a king there named Udayana.

*Yaugandharayana*: We have heard of him. What about him?

*Student*: He loved his queen, Vasavadatta, the daughter of Avanti's king, passionately.

*Yaugandharayana*: Very natural. Go on!

*Student*: Then, when the king was away hunting, the village caught fire, and she perished in the flames.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) It's a lie, it's a lie! Alas, I am still alive, unlucky I!

*Yaugandharayana*: Go on!

*Student*: Then, a minister named Yaugandharayana jumped into that fire with intent to rescue her, and perished.

*Yaugandharayana*: Did he really? And then?

*Student*: The king, on his return, heard the news of the death of both these, and was so grieved at parting from them both, that he sought to jump into that

same fire and commit suicide, and it was a job for his ministers to hold him back.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Yes. I know my lord's great love for me.

*Yaugandharayana*: And then ?

*Student*: The king hugged to his bosom the charred remains of the ornaments which had adorned her body, and fell down unconscious.

*All*: Alas!

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) The noble Yaugandharayana is now satisfied, I hope. (weeps).

*Maid*: (to Padmavati) Princess, this lady is in tears.

*Padmavati* : She must have a very tender heart.

*Yaugandharayana*: Quite so, quite so. My sister is tender-hearted by nature. Then ?

*Student*: Then, by degrees, he regained consciousness.

*Padmavati*: (to herself) Thank God, he lives. There was a void in my heart when I heard that he fell in a swoon.

*Yaugandharayana*: Then ?

*Student*: Then, the king suddenly got up, with his body red with dust by rolling on the ground in grief, and burst into lamentation after lamentation, calling out in agony, "O Vasavadatta, O daughter of Avanti's king, O my heart's beloved, O darling pupil !" In short

No chakravaka bird grieved like him for its mate held dear,
Nor have any others from their fairy lovers parted;
Blessed is a woman loved with affection so sincere,
She lives in her lord's love for e'er though burnt and departed. (13)

*Yaugandharayana*: But, tell me, sir, did not some minister seek to console him?

*Student*: Yes, there was a minister, Rumanvan, who tried his utmost to console the king. Oh,

Like the king, he too takes no food,
Tears have made both his cheeks hollow!
Serving the king in ev'ry mood
Night and day, he's full of sorrow.
He cares not for his clothes or looks,
Any more than the ugly rooks;
Should the king, by any chance, die,
He will follow without a sigh. (14)

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Happily, my lord is in good hands.

*Yaugandharayana*: (to himself) Oh, what a burden does Rumanvan carry! For,

My burden allows me some rest,
He is always by his oppressed,
For ev'rything depends on him
Whom the king leans on in his whim. (15)

(aloud) And, sir, has the king recovered by now?

*Student*: That I do not know. The ministers left the village taking with them, with very great difficulty, the king who was raving in grief 'Here I laughed with her here I chatted with her; here I sat with her; here we had a love quarrel; here I passed the night with her; here I lay by her side" and so on and so forth. With the departure of the king, the village became desolate, like the sky when the moon and the stars have set, and I too came away.

*Woman Hermit*: Verily, he must be a noble and virtuous king, since even this stranger praises him so.

*Maid*: Princess, I wonder whether he will marry another.

*Padmavati*: (to herself) That is just what my own heart is querying.

*Student*: (to the chamberlain and Yaugandharayana) Now I would fain depart. Pray, give me leave.

*Both*: Go, then, sir, and may you fare well!

*Student*: Thank you. (Exit).

*Yaugandharayana*: Well, I should also like to depart, with Her Highness's leave.

*Chamberlain*: He wants Your Highness's leave to depart.

*Padmavati*: Your sister will grieve in your absence, sir.

*Yaugandharayana*: Being entrusted to the care of good persons, she will not grieve. (looks at the Chamberlain). Now, let me go.

*Chamberlain*: Go, then, sir. Hope, we shall meet again.

*Yaugandharayana*: I hope so too, (Exit Yaugandharayana)

*Chamberlain*: Lady, it is now time to retire.

*Padmavati*: (to woman Hermit) Reverend lady, I salute you.

*Woman Hermit*: My child, may you soon get a husband worthy of you!

*Vasavadatta*: Reverend lady, I too salute you.

*Woman Hermit*: May you be united with your husband soon!

*Vasavadatta*: I thank you.

*Chamberlain*: Come along then. This way, this way, my lady. For now,

The birds have all to their nests retired,
The hermits lave in ponds their limbs tired;
The fires are lighted and blaze away,
The smoke all through the grove makes its way.
The sun has from his height descended
With his piercing rays, the reins, drawn in,
He has stopped his car and alighted
On the peak of the western mountain. (16)

(Exeunt Omnes)

*(End of Act I.)*

# ACT II

NTERLUDE.

*(Enter a Maid).*

*Maid*: Kunjarika, Kunjarika ![1] Where, oh where, is the Princess Padmavati? What do you say? "The princess is playing with a ball near the jasmine bower" ?[2] All right, then, I shall go to her. (walks about and looks around her). Ah, here comes the princess herself playing with a ball. Her ear-pendants are swaying in the wind. Her face, rendered doubly beautiful by the exertion, is strewn with beads of perspiration caused by the exercise. I'll go to her.

(Exit)

(Here ends the Interlude).

(Enter Padmavati playing with a ball, and followed by her retinue and Vasavadatta).

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1. Another maid, not on the stage.
2. Here, Kunjaraka's voice off the stage.

*Vasavadatta*: (Picking up and giving the ball to Padmavati) Here is your ball, my dear.

*Padmavati*: That's enough for the present, madam.

*Vasavadatta*: You have played too long with the ball, my dear. Your hands are so red that they look as if they belong to some other person.[3]

*Maid*: Play on, princess, play on. Make the most of this charming period of maidenhood.

*Padmavati*: (to Vasavadatta) Why do you look at me like that, dear lady? I think you are laughing at me. Do I look ridiculous?

*Vasavadatta*: Not at all, my dear. To-day, you are looking more beautiful than ever. I am looking at your handsome face from every side.

*Padmavati*: Go to! Don't make fun of me!

*Vasavadatta*: I shall cease, O daughter-in-law-elect of Mahasena!

*Padmavati*: And who may this Mahasena be?

*Vasavadatta*: There is a King of Ujjain called Pradyota. Owing to the vast size of his army, he is called Mahasena.

*Maid*: The princess is not desirous of any alliance with that monarch.

*Vasavadatta*: Then, with whom does she desire an alliance?

*Maid*: There is a king of Vatsa called Udayana. The princess is enamoured of his virtues.

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3. Because the colour has become so different from the rest of Padmavati's body. The implied suggestion is that the hands look as if dyed with henna juice, like a bride's.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) She desires to wed my husband! (Aloud) Why?

*Maid*: Because he is tender-hearted. That's why.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) I know; I too was captivated by that quality of his.

*Maid*: (to the princess) But princess, suppose that king should prove to be ugly?

*Vasavadatta*: No, no, he is very handsome.

*Padmavati*: How do you know that, dear lady?

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Partiality for my lord has made me transgress the bounds of propriety. What shall I do now? Ah, I have it. (aloud) That's what everybody says in Ujjaini, my dear.

*Padmavati*: Quite so. It would not be difficult for the people of Ujjaini to see him. And beauty, I suppose, captivates the hearts of all.

(Enter Nurse of Padmavati)

*Nurse*: Victory to the princess! Princess, thou art betrothed!

*Vasavadatta*: To whom, madam?

*Nurse*: To Udayana, King of Vatsa.

*Vasavadatta*: Is that king in good health?

*Nurse*: Oh, yes; he arrived here quite well, and has accepted the hand of our princess.

*Vasavadatta*: What an improper thing!

*Padmavati*: Why, what is the impropriety?

*Vasavadatta*: Oh, nothing much. I was only thinking of his grieving for his queen in that manner then, and his indifference to her now.

*Nurse*: Madam, great minds, like his, are ruled by the sacred scriptures, and are, therefore, consoled easily.

*Vasavadatta*: Good lady, tell me, did he himself seek the princess's hand ?

*Nurse*: Oh, no. When he came here, on some other business, our king, seeing in him a combination of noble birth, learning, youth and beauty, himself offered him her hand.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Ah, then, my lord is not to blame.

(Enter another Maid.)

*Maid*: Princess, make haste, make haste. The queen says "To-day, the conjunction of the stars is auspicious, and we must have the bridal k ot tied this very day."

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) The more they hasten, the thicker becomes the darkness in my heart.

*Nurse*: Come, princess, come.

(Exeunt Omnes)

*(End of Act II.)*

# ACT III

(The palace gardens at Rajagriha).

(*Enter Vasavadatta deep in thought*)

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) I have left Padmavati in the ladies' court, with its festive wedding crowd of women, and have managed to come alone to this pleasure garden in order to get rid of the sorrow which Fate has brought on me. (walks about) Oh, what misery ! Even my husband has become another's!

Let me sit down. (sits down). Blessed is the female *Chakravaka* bird! Separated from her mate, she does not live. But I do not die. Miserable that I am, I go on living in the hope of seeing my lord again.

(Enter a Maid carrying flowers)

*Maid*: Where could lady Avantika have gone? (walks about and looks round her.) Ah, there she is, seated on the stone bench under the *Priyangu* creeper. Dressed in that plain, but graceful, garment, she sits plunged in deep meditation, looking like the crescent moon obscured by the mist. I'll go to her (approaches her). Lady Avantika, I have been looking for you for a long time.

*Vasavadatta*: What for?

*Maid*: The Queen says "The lady comes from a noble family. She is skilled, and loving. Let her, therefore, make the wedding garland."

*Vasavadatta*: And for whom am I to make it?

*Maid*: For our princess.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Ah me, this too has fallen to my lot. Verily, the gods are pitiless.

*Maid*: Lady, let not anything else occupy your thoughts now.

The bridegroom is already having his bath in the mosaic room. So, please make the garland quickly.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) I cannot think of anything else. (aloud) Have you seen the bridegroom, my dear?

*Maid*: Oh yes. My affection for the princess and my own curiosity, led me to do so.

*Vasavadatta*: And what is he like ?

*Maid*: Madam, I tell you, I have never seen his like before.

*Vasavadatta*: Tell me, tell me, my dear, is he handsome ?

*Maid*: He is the god of love himself, without the bow and arrows.

*Vasavadatta*: Thanks, that will do.

*Maid*: Why do you stop me ?

*Vasavadatta*: It is improper to listen to the praises of another woman's husband.

*Maid*: Then, please hurry on with the wreath, madam.

*Vasavadatta*: I shall do it at once. Give those leaves and flowers to me.

*Maid*: Here they are. Please take them. (hands them over)

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Here am I, making the wreath, unlucky I ! (turns out the basket, and examines the flowers and leaves, and then asks about a leaf) What is this leaf ?

*Maid*: It is called "Widowhood-preventer".

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) This I shall use in plenty, both for my own sake, as well as Padmavati's (aloud) And this ?

*Maid* : It is called "Rival-exterminator".

*Vasavadatta*: This must not be used.

*Maid*: Why not ?

*Vasavadatta*: His wife is dead, and there is no rival to exterminate. So, it is useless.

*Another maid*: (entering) Make haste, lady, make haste. The bridegroom is being conducted to the ladies' court by the married women.

*Vasavadatta*: It is ready. Take it (gives the garland).

*First Maid*: Thanks. I must be off, madam. (both the maids go).

*Vasavadatta*: She is gone. Oh Misery! Even my husband now belongs to another woman! Ah, I'll go to bed. Sleep may allay my pain, if I get it (Exit)

(*End of Act III.*)

# ACT IV.

INTERLUDE.

*(Palace at Rajagriha).*

(Enter the Jester).

*Jester*: (In glee) Ha! Ha! How delighted I am to be present on this joyous occasion of the marriage of my master, the king of Vatsa! Who could have dreamt that, after being submerged in such a whirlpool of misfortune we should come to the surface again like this? Now I live once more in a palace, bathe in the tanks of the inner court, and eat dainty and delicious dishes. It is almost as if I am living in Paradise, except that there are no celestial nymphs here to keep me company. There is just one great drawback. I cannot digest my food at all. I get no sleep even on the downiest beds. I feel gout hovering all over my body. Oh, there is no happiness in life without good health and fine food!

(Enter a Maid).

*Maid*: Where could the worthy Vasantaka have gone? (looks round). Ah, here he is! (approaches him). Noble Vasantaka, I have been looking for you for a long time.

*Jester*: (Looking at her) And why were you looking for me, my dear?

*Maid*: The Queen wants to know whether the son-in-law has finished his bath.

*Jester*: Why does she want to know that?

*Maid*: So that I may take flowers and unguents to him, of course.

*Jester*: His Majesty has bathed. You may bring anything except eatables.

*Maid*: Why do you except eatables?

*Jester*: Because, unlucky that I am, my belly is rolling like a cuckoo's eyes.

*Maid*: May you ever be like that!

*Jester*: Off with you! I shall go and join His Majesty.

(*Exeunt*).

(End of Interlude.)

(Palace garden.)

(Enter Padmavati, accompanied by her retinue, and Vasavadatta disguised as Avantika).

*Maid*: What has brought the princess to the pleasure garden?

*Padmavati*: My dear, I came to see whether the *Sephalika* clusters are in blossom.

*Maid*: They are in blossom, princess. They are laden with flowers that look like pendants of pearls interspersed with coral.

*Padmavati*: If that is so, my dear, why do you delay ?

*Maid*: Let the princess sit down for a while on this stone bench, while I go and gather the flowers.

*Padmavati*: (to Vasavadatta) Shall we sit here, madam ?

*Vasavadatta*: Yes. (Both sit down on a stone bench).

*Maid*: (having collected some flowers). See, princess, see. My hands are full of *sephalika* blossoms with their halfstockings of the colour of red arsenic.

*Padmavati*: (observing them) See lady, what brilliant colours these flowers have !

*Vasavadatta*: Yes, what lovely flowers !

*Maid*: Princess, shall I pick some more ?

*Padmavati*: No, my dear, no more.

*Vasavadatta*: Why do you stop her, my dear ?

*Padmavati*: Because, I shall be honoured when my noble lord comes here and sees this wealth of flowers.

*Vasavadatta*: Do you love him very much, my dear ?

*Padmavati*: I don't know, lady, but when he is not by my side, I feel ever so lonely.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) How hard is my lot, seeing that even she speaks thus.

*Maid*: How finely the princess has said "I love my husband" !

*Padmavati*: I have a doubt.

*Vasavadatta*: What is it ?

*Padmavati*: Whether my noble lord meant as much to Vasavadatta as to me.

*Vasavadatta:* Aye, even more !

*Padmavati:* How do you know ?

*Vasavadatta:* (to herself) Ah, partiality for my noble lord has made me once again overstep the bounds of propriety. I know what to say (aloud). Had her love for him been less, she would not have foresaken her own people and eloped with him.

*Padmavati:* You are right.

*Maid:* Princess, gently suggest to your husband that you too would like to learn to play on the lute ![1]

*Padmavati:* I did speak to him about it.

*Vasavadatta:* And what did he say ?

*Padmavati:* He said nothing. He heaved a deep sigh, and remained silent.

*Vasavadatta:* What do you gather from that ?

*Padmavati:* I gather that he remembered the noble Vasavadatta and her virtues. Only out of courtesy for me, he restrained his tears in my presence.

*Vasavadatta:* (to herself) Blessed am I if that is true !

(Enter the King and Jester).

*Jester:* Ha ! Ha ! How lovely this pleasure garden looks with this springling of the *bandhujiva* flowers fallen in the course of plucking ! This way, my lord,

*King:* Here I come, my dear Vasantaka, here I come.

Once, as you know, I went to Ujjaini and saw
Unimpeded the daughter of Avanti's king ;
The god of love that moment shot all his five arrows
At me at once, and I felt love, sweet and fierce, gnaw

1. This is to make him love her like Vasavadatta, his former pupil.

At my heart, with intense pain, and in my ears ring.
Wherefrom this sixth arrow to add to my sorrows? (1)

*Jester*: Where has Lady Padmavati gone ? Has she gone to the arbour of creepers, or to the stone-bench called the "Crest of the Hill", which is so strewn with *asana* blossoms that it has the appearance of being covered with a tiger's skin ? Or could she have entered the wood of the seven-leaved-trees with their powerful and pungent scent ? Or has she gone to the wooden pavilion adorned with paintings of birds and beasts on its walls ? (He gazes upwards). Ha ! Ha ! Your Majesty ! Do you see that line of cranes flying with speed across the spotless autumn sky, looking as beautiful as the long white arms of the adored Baladeva.[1]

*King*: Friend, I see them. Oh how wonderful !
Now the line is straight, now it's broken,
Now the flight is upward, now it's low,
This line of birds divides the welkin
In two, like boundary marks we know.
The sky is spotless like the belly
Of a serpent casting off its slough ;
When the birds turn and wheel round, we see
Them twisted like the Great Bear itself. (2)

---

*Maid*: Look, princess, look at this flock of cranes, advancing steadily in line, white and lovely, like a garland of water-lilies. Oh, the king !

*Padmavati*: Ah, it's my noble lord ! (to Vasavadatta). Lady, for your sake, I shall avoid meeting my lord. So, let us enter the jasmine bower.

---

1. Same as Balarama.

*Vasavadatta*: All right. (the three leave the stone-bench and enter the jasmine bower.)

---

*Jester*: The princess Padmavati must have come here and gone away.

*King*: How do you know that ?

*Jester*: Look at these *sephalika* bushes from which the flowers have been plucked.

*King*: (feels the stone-bench). Yes, you are right.

This bench retains still the warmth of people sitting,
The flowers below also show signs of treading:
So, some one has sat here just now, I am quite sure,
And hurried away, on seeing me, so demure, (2-a)

Oh, Vasantaka, what brilliant colours these flowers have!

---

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) That name 'Vasantaka' makes me feel as if I were at Ujjaini again.

---

*King*: Vasantaka, let us sit down on this stone bench, and wait for Padmavati.

*Jester*: All right (sits down on the bench, and rises again) Ho! Ho! The heat of this scorching autumn sun is unbearable. Let us enter that jasmine bower.

*King*: Very well. Lead the way.

*Jester*: All right. (Both walk round).

---

*Padmavati*: The noble Vasantaka is about to spoil everything. What shall we do now ?

*Maid*: Princess, shall I keep the king away by shaking this hanging creeper and making the myriad bees, lurking there, to fly about ?

*Padmavati*: Yes. Do. (The maid does so, and the bees rush towards the jester in swarms).

---

*Jester*: Help! Help! Keep back, Your Majesty, keep back!

*King*: What is the matter?

*Jester*: I am attacked by these bastard bees,

*King*: Nay, don't say so. One should never frighten the bees.

Let not our foot-steps tread or harass
The melodiously humming bees;
Drunk with honey, they fondly caress
Their love-stricken mates, and their cares cease;
Part them not from their sweethearts tender,
They too are pained when torn asunder. (3)

Let us, therefore, sit on this stone bench alone.

*Jester*: All right. (Both sit down on the bench).

---

*Maid*: Princess, we are now prisoners here.

*Padmavati*: Happily, it is my noble lord who sits there.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) I am glad to see my noble lord in such good health.

*Maid*: Princess, look! This lady's eyes are filled with tears!

*Vasavadatta*: The pollen of the *kasa* flowers, set flying by the wanton bees, has fallen into my eyes, and made them water.

*Padmavati*: Quite so.

---

*Jester*: Well now, the pleasure garden is deserted. I want to ask Your Majesty something. May I?

*King*: Yes, if you like,

*Jester*: Whom do you love more, Queen Vasavadatta of yore, or Queen Padmavati of to-day ?

*King*: Now, why do you want to put me in a most awkward predicament ?

---

*Padmavati*: Oh dear, what an awkward predicament for my noble lord !

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) And for me too, unlucky that I am !

---

*Jester*: Tell me without reserve. One is dead, another is nowhere near.

*King*: No, my friend, no. I shall not tell you. You are a chatterbox.

---

*Padmavati*: By saying that much, my noble lord has said enough.

---

*Jester*: I swear to you that I shall never tell a soul. See, I bite my tongue.[1]

*King*: No, my friend, I dare not tell you.

---

*Padmavati*: How stupidly importunate he is ! Even after that, he cannot read his heart.

---

*Jester*: What, you won't tell me ? Well if you don't, you shall not stir a step from the stone bench ! I shall hold Your Majesty prisoner.

*King*: What ! By force ?

*Jester*: Yes, by force.

*King*: Well, then, we shall see.

*Jester*: Forgive me for my impudence. I conjure you to tell me the truth, in the name of our friendship.

---

1. That is, I seal my lips.

*King*: What to do now? I am helpless. Listen:—

Her beauty, virtue, sweetness, make me
Hold Padmavati in high regard,
But Vasavadatta holds the key.
Of my heart, both vanguard and rear-guard! (14)
She grieved when I grieved, rejoiced when I rejoiced;
She was glad when I was praised, and sad when blamed;
When I had keen anguish of heart, though unvoiced;
Lo, I found her grieving for the pang unnamed!
When I was angry, she spoke sweet words soothing,
She knew to do all things to the times suiting;
She was to me a wife, a friend, a servant,
And a minister great and all-observant. (4-a)

---

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Well, well, I am now amply recompensed for all my suffering. Even this disguise has many merits.

*Maid*: Princess, really, my lord lacks all courtesy.

*Padmavati*: Not at all, my dear. My lord has shown great courtesy in remembering even now all the merits of the noble Vasavadatta.

*Vasavadatta*: My dear, your words are worthy of your exalted birth.

---

*King*: Well, I have told you. Now, it is your turn to tell me whom you like better, Vasavadatta of yore, or Padmavati of to-day.

---

*Padmavati*: Now, my noble lord is acting as Vasantaka did.

---

*Jester*: Why this useless query? I hold both the queens in very high esteem.

*King*: Fool, you compelled me to speak, and now, you refuse to give out your opinion.

*Jester*: What, will you compel me too?

*King*: Yes, of course.

*Jester*: All right. Then, you will never hear it.

*King*: Forgive me, O mighty Brahman. Speak of your own free will.

*Jester*: Then, listen. I held Queen Vasavadatta in very high regard. Queen Padmavati is young, beautiful gentle, free from conceit and anger, and very courteous. And she has one other great virtue. She comes with delicious dishes, saying, "Now, where can the noble Vasantaka have gone?"

---

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Vasantaka! You shall remember this.

---

*King*: Very well, Vasantaka, I shall tell Queen Vasavadatta all this.

*Jester*: Alas! Vasavadatta! Where is Vasavadatta? She died long ago!

*King*: (sadly) So it is. Vasavadatta is no more!

That jest of yours made my mind wander,
To those days of yore to me so dear;
My lips were by force torn asunder,
By old habit formed when she was near. (5)

---

*Padmavati*:: It was a delightful conversation. It has been cut short by this wretched fellow.

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Well, well, I am consoled now. Ah, how sweet it is to hear these words unobserved!

*Jester*: Courage, my king, courage! Who can gainsay Fate? It has happened so, and that is all that can be said about it.

*King*: Friend, you do not understand my condition. For,

Can one forget a love which shook the heart?
Fond memory brings it back with a start;
Our sad and mortgaged minds get free, one fears,
Only by paying in full the debt of tears. (6)

*Jester*: (to himself) His Majesty's face is wet with tears. I shall get some water for washing it. (Exit).

---

*Padmavati*: (to Vasavadatta) Madam, my noble lord's face is hidden in a veil of tears. Let us slip away now.

*Vasavadatta*: Yes, let us go. No, you stay here. It will not be right on your part to go away, leaving your husband in such a sad mood. I will go alone.

*Maid*: The lady is right. You should go to him, Princess.

*Padmavati*: What do you say? Shall I go?

*Vasavadatta*: Yes, my dear, do. (Exit Vasavadatta towards the palace. Padmavati goes towards the King).

*Jester*: (enters with water in a lotus leaf). Here is Lady Padmavati!

*Padmavati*: Vasantaka, what is this?

*Jester*: This is that; that is this.

*Padmavati*: Speak out, sir, speak out.

*Jester*: My lady, the pollen of the *kasa* flowers, wafted by the wind, got into the king's eyes and his face is bathed in tears. So, please take this water to him for washing his face.

*Padmavati*: (to herself) Ah, the chivalrous master has a chivalrous servant ! (takes the water from him and approaches the king). Victory to my noble lord ! Here is water for washing your face !

*King*: Thanks Padmavati ? (aside) Vasantaka, what is this ?

*Jester*: It is like this (whispers in his ear).

*King*: Good, Vasantaka, good. (sips water) Padmavati, be seated.

*Padmavati*: As my noble lord commands (sits down).

*King*: (to Padmavati).

Fair one, the pollen of these *kasa* flowers,
White as the autumn moon, was, by the wind, blown
Into my eyes, and is the cause of these tears
Which have bathed my face, as you yourself have known. (7)

(to himself)

The heart of woman is full of fear
Of losing what it holds very dear;
This young girl, though brave, is newly-wed,
If she learns the truth, her heart is bled. (8)

*Jester*: His Majesty, the King of Magadha, is giving a reception this afternoon to all his friends, in your honour. Courtesy reciprocating courtesy engenders affection. So, it is time for Your Majesty, to make a move.

*King*: Yes, indeed. Good that it occurred to you now. (rises)—

It's easy enough in the world to find
Men with noble virtue and courtesy,
But, it's by no means so easy to find
People who value those qualities duly. (9)

(Exeunt Omnes).

(*End of Act IV*).

## ACT V

(RAJAGRIHA. KING DARSAKA'S PALACE.)

*Interlude.*

(Enter Padminika).

*Padminika*: Madhukarika, Madhukarika, come here quick!

*Madhukarika*: (Entering) Here I am, my dear, what do you want me to do?

*Padminika*: Don't you know, my dear, that Princess Padmavati is suffering from a severe headache?

*Madhukarika*: Alas!

*Padminika*: Go quickly, and call Lady Avantika·Simply tell her that the princess has a headache, and she will come of her own accord.

*Madhukarika* But, what can she do, my dear?

*Padminika*: Why, she will relieve the pain by telling the princess amusing stories.

*Madhukarika*: That is a good idea. Where has the bed of the princess been arranged?

*Padminika*: In the Ocean Pavilion[1] You go now. I shall look for the noble Vasantaka, to ask him to inform his master.

*Madhukarika*: All right (Exit)

*Padminika*: Now, where shall I find the noble Vasantaka?

(Enter the Jester).

*Jester*: (to himself) The heart of the noble King of Vatsa was depressed after his separation from his queen, but now, on this auspicious and extremely joyful occasion of his nuptial celebrations, the fire of love

fanned, as it were, by the marriage with Padmavati, burns brighter than ever to-day. (sees Padminika). Hullo, here's Padminika. What's the news Padminika?

*Padminika*: Why, noble Vasantaka, don't you know that princess Padmavati is having a bad headache?

*Jester*: Truly, lady, I did not know.

*Padminika*: Well, then, go and inform my lord about it. I shall meanwhile go and hurry up with the ointment for her forehead.

*Jester*: Where has Princess Padmavati's bed been arranged?

*Padminika*: It has been spread in the Ocean Pavilion.

*Jester*. Well, you had better be off. I shall go and inform His Majesty.

(*Exeunt*).

(End of the Interlude).

---

(Enter the King).

*King*: (to himself),

Embarking once more on the sea of married life,
My thoughts go back to darling Vasavadatta,
Daughter of Avanti's king, my beloved wife,
Who was consumed by fierce flames at Lavanaka,
Even as a lotus flower in bud is nipped
By cruel frost whose e'r-hungry tongue is death-tipped.
(1)

*Jester*: (Entering) Hurry up, sir, hurry up!

*King*: What is the matter?

*Jester*: Queen Padmavati is having a bad headache.

*King*: Who told you?

*Jester*: Padminika.

*King*: Alas !

This new wedding with a girl of beauty,
Who has also a sense of duty,
Has toned down a little my great sorrow,
Though it is still there for those who burrow;
Having once quaffed the cup of misery,
I dread a like fate for Padmavati. (2)

Well, where is Padmavati ?

*Jester*: Her bed has been arranged in the Ocean Pavilion.

*King*: Then, show me the way there.

*Jester*: Come this way, Your Majesty. (Both walk about). This is the Ocean Pavilion. Be pleased to enter.

*King*: You go in first.

*Jester*: All right (enters). Help ! Help ! Back, Your Majesty, stand back !

*King*: What's the matter ?

*Jester*: Here is a cobra wriggling on the floor. The light of the lamp reveals its body clearly.

*King*: (enters and looks at the thing indicated, and smiles). (To himself) The idiot has taken this for a cobra ! (aloud)

Fool, look closely, and you will see
That it's but a wreath flowery
Fallen from the portal arch high,
The gentle e'ening breeze wafts it;
Its movements with a serpent's vie.
As it lies there turned o'er a bit. (3).

*Jester*: (scrutinising the object closely) Your Majesty is right. This is indeed not a cobra. (enters the room and looks round attentively) Queen Padmavati must have come here and gone away.

*King*: Friend, she could not have come here.

*Jester*: How does Your Majesty know?

*King*: What is there in this?

See, the bed is unruffled as when 't was spread,
Undisturbed too is the quilt' and the pillow
Is not crushed, or stained yellow, blue, green, or red
With any headache ointment doctors know;
Nothing is here to divert the patient's eyes,
No sick person will from bed so promptly rise. (4)

*Jester*: Then, you had better sit down on the bed for a while, and wait for the queen.

*King*: Very well (sits down). Friend, I feel awfully sleepy. Please tell me a story.

*Jester*: I'll tell you a story, but you must say, "Hm! Hm!" to show that you are listening.

*King*: Very well.

*Jester*: There is a city called Ujjaini.In that city, there are some charming bathing pools.

*King*: What! Ujjaini, did you say?

*Jester*: If you don't like this story, I shall tell you another.

*King*: Oh, no. It is not that I do not like the story. Only,

It brings to mind the daughter of Avanti's King,
Who thought of all her people when we were starting,
And wept and shed on my breast red-hot tears of love,
Which welled from her eyes while she trembled like a dove. (5)

Besides, friend,

Oft, in the midst of lessons, would she fix her eyes,
On me, and gaze as if to read my inmost thoughts,
Her hand, with plectrum dropped, would then swing in such wise,
Playing on air or on my life-strings or heart-knots. (6)

*Jester*: Well, I'll tell you another story. There is a city called Brahmadatta. In that, there ruled a king called Kampilya.

*King*: What did you say?

(Jester repeats what he has just said).

*King*: Idiot! You should say King Brahmadatta, and Kampilya city.

*Jester*: What? The king is Brahmadatta, and the city Kampilya?

*King*: Yes.

*Jester*: Then, wait a moment while I commit this to memory. King Brahmadatta, Kampilya city, King Brahmadatta, Kampilya city (repeats this several times). Now, listen. (To himself). Hullo, His Majesty is fast asleep! It is very chilly at this hour. I'll go and fetch my shawl. (Exit)

(Enter Vasavadatta, disguised as Avantika, and a maid).

*Maid*: Come, madam, come. The Princess is suffering from a severe headache.

*Vasavadatta*: I am very sorry to hear it. Where has the bed of Padmavati been arranged?

*Maid*: It has been spread in the Ocean Pavilion.

*Vasavadatta*: Then, lead the way (both walk round).

*Maid:* This is the Ocean Pavilion. Enter madam. Meanwhile, I shall go and hurry up with the ointment for her head. (Exit maid).

*Vasavadatta*: (to herself) Verily, the gods have no pity on me! Even Padmavathi, who was a source of comfort to my noble lord, in the agony of his bereavement, has now fallen ill herself. I'll go in. (she enters and looks round). Oh, the carelessness of these servants! Padmavati is ill, and, yet, all of them have left her, with just a lamp her companion. Ah she is asleep. I'll sit down. But, if I sit at a distance from her, it will look as if I do not love her enough. So, I'll seat myself on her bed itself (sits down on the edge of the bed). I say, why is it that, as I sit here, my heart is throbbing with pleasure and excitement? Happily her breathing is easy, unobstructed and regular. Her headache must have left her. Occupying only a small portion of the bed, she seems to invite me to clasp her in my arms. I will lie by her side (proceeds to lie down on the bed).

*King*: (talking in his sleep) O, Vasavadatta!

*Vasavadatta*: (rising abrupty from the bed) Humph! It's my noble lord, and not Padmavati. Has he seen me? If so, the great vow of Yaugandharayana's[1] would have been made in vain.

---

1 Yaugandharayana's intention was to conceal the fact of Vasavadatta's being alive till Vatsaraja had regained his kingdom with help of the King of Magadha, who might not have been willing to help him if Padmavati were not the sole queen to enjoy the fruits of his help.

*King*: Oh, daughter of Avanti's king!

*Vasavadatta*: Luckily, my noble lord is only talking in his sleep. There is no one about. So, I'll stay here awhile, and gladden my eyes and my heart.

*King*: O, darling! O, beloved pupil! Respond to my call.

*Vasavadatta*: I am responding, my lord, I am responding.

*King*: Are you angry?

*Vasavadatta*: No, no. Only, sad and unhappy.

*King*: If you are not angry with me, why have you laid aside your ornaments?

*Vasavadatta*: What could be better than this?

*King*: Are you thinking of Virachika?[1]

*Vasavadatta* (wrathfully) Shame! Even here Virachika!

*King*: Then, I implore your pardon for Virachika.

(he stretches out his hands).

*Vasavadatta*: I've stayed long enough. I may be seen, here any moment. I shall go now. But I'll first replace the arm of my noble lord, that is hanging down, from the couch. (she does so, and goes away).

*King*: (Rising abruptly) Stay, Vasavadatta, stay, Alas!

I rushed after her in haste,
I knocked my head on the door,
Is it but a vision waste,
Too well suited to my taste?
Or, did I see her once more?
That's with me a point sore. (7)

*Jester*: (entering) Ah, Your Majesty is awake!

1 A former mistress of Udayana,

*King*: Friend, I've good news to tell you. Vasavadatta is alive! I saw her just now.

Only with beauty was she armed
The fortress of my heart she stormed,
And entered by the gate, the eye,
And has stopped there for e'r and aye. (7-a)

*Jester*: Alas! Vasavadatta,! Where is Vasavadatta? Vasavadatta died long ago.

*King*: Say not so, my friend.

She came and woke me now as I lay asleep,
On this very couch, and then departed fast,
"She perished in the flames" said Rumanvan deep
And took me in, but here is the truth at last. (8)
Ah, ev'n when on Padmavati's forehead I found
That unfading tilak[1] mark I learned from the snake.
A glimpse of the truth came, and in my heart the sound
"The Lady of Avanti lives" did my frame shake, (8-a)

*Jester*: Alas! Such a thing is impossible. May be you saw her in a dream, since I mentioned the bathing pools of Ujjaini and set you thinking of her ladyship.

*King*:

If dream it was, I shall like to go on dreaming,
If it's but an illusion, may it last for e'r,
From such a dream there should never be a waking,
Nor should I from such an illusion recover. (9)

*Jester*: Friend, don't be ridiculous. A sylph called "The Belle of Avanti"[2] is haunting this palace. May be, it is she whom you saw.

---

1 Ceremonial saffron mark put on the forehead by married women among Hindus.

2 Avantisundari.

*King*: Oh, no.

Waking up, I saw her with her hair unbraided,
And those dear eyes of hers without collyrium,
Like a lady guarding her virtue unfaded,
I assure you, friend, it was no delirium. (10)

Besides, friend,

This arm was by her but clasped in sleep,
But, see, all its hairs are still on end,
She clasped my arm in her tremor deep,
And what a message did it me send! (11)

*Jester*: Don't imagine any more absurdities now. Come, come. Let us go back to the ladies' court.

*Chamberlain*: (entering) Victory to my noble lord! Our great king, Darsaka, sends you these tidings:—"Your Majesty's minister, Rumanvan, has arrived with a large force to attack the usurper, Aruni. Likewise, my army, consisting of elephants, chariots, cavalry, and infantry, is fully mobilised. So, rise, and be ready to march.

And then:—

Divided are your enemies now;
Among your subjects confidence reigns;
Your rear will be protected with love
By us with the last drops in our veins.
I have done all things to see that the foe
Is sure to be vanquished and laid low.
Our forces have crossed the Ganges great,
You are again lord of Vatsa's Fate!" (12)

*King*: (rising) Excellent. Now,

In battle, when the elephants roar
Like ocean-waves, and war-horses neigh,
When the arrows in great torrents pour,
Foul Aruni shall I meet and slay! (13)

(*Exeunt Omnes*).

(End of Act V).

# ACT VI

*(Kausambi Vatsaraja's Palace).*
*(Interlude).*

(Enter Mahasena's chamberlain).

*Chamberlain*: What ho! Who is here on duty at the Golden Arch Gate?

*Female Door-Keeper*: (Entering) Sir, it's I, Vijaya. What do you want me to do, sir?

*Chamberlain*: Good woman, take this message to Udayana whose fame has been enhanced by the re-conquest of the Vatsa country. Tell him "The chamberlain belonging to the Raibhya clan, sent by Mahasena, has arrived here along with Queen Vasavadatta's nurse the noble Vasundhara, sent by Queen Angaravati They are both waiting at your gate."

*Female Door-Keeper*: Sir, this is not the proper place or time for me to carry a message.

*Chamberlrin*: Why is it not the proper time or place?

*Female Door-Keeper*: Listen, sir. Today some one in the Suyamuna Palace[1] was playing on the lute. On hearing it, His Majesty said "I seem to hear the notes of Ghoshavati."

*Chamberlain*: And then?

*Female Door-Keeper*: Then somebody went and asked the man "Where did you get this lute?" He replied "I saw it lying in a thicket of reeds on the banks of the Narmada. If His Majesty has any use for it, you

1. The Suyamuna Palace, like the Suganga Palace at Pataliputar mentioned in Mudrarakshasa.

may take it to him." So, they took it to the king who pressed it to his side, and went off into a swoon. On recovering consciousness, he said, with his face suffused with tears, "I see you, O Ghoshavati, but her I see not!" That's why, sir, the occasion is not suitable. How can I take your message at such a time?

*Chamberlain:* Good woman, announce us. Our mission also has something to do with it.

*Female Door-Keeper:* Then, I'll announce you atonce, sir. Ah, His Majesty is coming down from the Suyamuna Palace. I shall tell him now.

*Chamberlain:* Do, good woman.

*(Exeunt).*

(End of Interlude).

(Enter King and Jester).

*King:* (looking at the lute in his hand)

O, lute of sweetest tone, thou didst once repose
On the breasts and lap of the loveliest queen,
How didst thou survive in that jungle morose
Where birds dropped their dirt and covered all thy sheen (1)
Thou out an unfeeling thing, Ghoshavati. How else could thou forgetted that unfortunate queen?
Thou felt'st not her hug, o, Ghoshavati,
As she, on her lovely hip, carried thee,
How couldst you forget the sweet rhapsody
Of lying 'twixt her breasts when she was weary,
Her words and smiles when intervals started,
Or her plaintive cries for me when parted, (2)

*Jester:* Enough of this excessive sorrow, Your Majesty.

*King:* Don't say so, my friend:—

My passion which had lain dormant long,
Has been re-awakened by this lute,
But the queen who loved it and its song,
I see not, and so am with grief mute.

Vasantaka, take Ghoshavati to some competent man, have her re-strung, and bring her back to me speedily.

*Jester:* As your Majesty orders (goes out with the lute).

(Enter Female Door-Keeper)

*Female Door-Keeper:* Victory to the King! The chamberlain of the Raibhya clan, sent by Mahasena, and Queen Vasavadatta's nurse, the noble Vasundhara, sent by Queen Angaravati, are waiting at the door

*King:* Then, go and call Padmavati.

*Female Door-Keeper:* As Your Majesty orders (Exit)

*King:* How now? How soon this news[2] has reached Mahasena!

(Enter Padmavati and the female door-keeper).

*Female Door-Keeper:* This way, my queen!

*Padmavati:* Victory to my lord!

*King:* Padmavati, did you hear that Mahasena's chamberlain, of the Raibhya clan, sent by him, and Vasavadatta's nurse, the noble Vasundhara, sent by Queen Angaravati, have arrived here, and are waiting outside?

---

2. This refers either to the marriage of Padmavati or to the re-conquest of the Vatsa kingdom, or both.

*Padmavati*: I shall be glad to have good news of my relatives, my noble lord.

*King*: It is fitting that you, my queen, should look upon Vasavadatta's relatives as your own. Be seated, Padmavati. Why don't you sit down?

*Padmavati*: Does my noble lord want me to be seated by his side when receiving these people?

*King*: What harm is there in that?

*Padmavati*: It may look callous to them, as I am now in the place of Queen Vasavadatta, their Princess.

*King*: But, it would be a gross breach of etiquette to prevent those persons, who are entitled to see you, my wife, from doing so. So, please be seated.

*Padmavati*: As my noble lord commands (sits down). My lord, I fell rather uneasy as to what Mahasena and his queen will say.

*King*: Quite so, Padmavati.

My heart is full of forebodings, my darling,
I dread the most harsh words he may have to say:
I fled with his daughter, without him telling,
And then, woe me, lost her in a fire that day!
My merits, my darling, are all exhausted,
Fickle Fortune has got with me disgruntled;
I feel afraid like a son who his sire's ire
Has roused by foolish acts of consequences dire. (4)

*Padmavati*: Nothing can be prevented when its proper time has come.

*Female Door-Keeper*: The chamberlain and nurse are waiting at the door.

*King*: Conduct them here at once.

*Female Door-Keeper*: As my lord commands (Exit).

(Enter the chamberlain, the nurse and the female door-keeper).

*Chamberlain:*

On coming here to our ally's realm,
My heart is filled with rejoicing great,
But grief and sorrow me overwhelm
When I remember my princess' fate!
You could have robbed him, O unkind fate,
Of his realm, but spared him his mate! (5)

*Female Door-Keeper*: Here is my lord, sir. Approach him.

*Chamberlain*: (approaching the king) Victory to my noble lord!

*Nurse*: Victory to my noble lord!

*King*: (to the chamberlain—respectfully) Sir.

Is he well, that king of kings,
Who can make and unmake kings,
He whose alliance I sought,
He who never me forgot? (6)

*Chamberlain*: Yes. Mahasena is well. He enquires whether all's well here also.

*King*: (rising from his seat) What are Mahasena's commands?

*Chamberlaini*: This is worthy of the son of Vaidehi![3] Now, pray be seated, and hear Mahasena's message.

*King*: As Mahasena orders (sits down).

3. Because Udayana was the son of Mrigavati, a princess of Kosala and a descendant of Sita or Vaidehi.

*Chamberlain:* "Congratulations on your regaining the kingdom seized by enemies! For,

Never can the faint-hearted and the weak,
Have great energy or activity:
None can of royal glory dream or speak
Who's not overflowing with energy." (7)

*King:* Sir, it is all due to Mahasena's blessings.

Defeated I stood before him shame-faced,
But, like a son of his, he me embraced;
His daughter I kidnapped and took away,
And failed to keep her safe, that woeful day,
But, he, after hearing about her end,
This honoured embassy to me did send.
So, his love is the same and has not waned,
And, by his grace, my land too is regained. (8)

*Chamberlain:* Well, that is the message of Mahasena. This lady here will deliver the message of the queen.

*King:* Ah, mother!

Is she well, that queen of queens,
The first among sixteen queens,
My mother, the town deity,
who, for us, shed tears weighty? (9)

*Nurse:* The queen is well, and enquires if all are well here.

*King:* you see what kind of health those who were mine had,

*Nurse:* Enough of his excessive sorrow, my lord.

*Chamberlain:* Courage, my noble lord. Grieved for thus by Your Majesty, Mahasena's daughter, though dead, is not really dead. But, surely,

Death cannot be stayed when the hour has struck,
The pitcher must fal: down when the rope breaks;
With men and trees the same law is at work,
They grow, and they are cut down in Time's wakes. (10)

*King:* Say not so, sir,
How can I forget Mahasena's daughter,
My pupil, my dear queen, ev'n in births to come?
Death may come on me, earth may turn to water,
But n'er will they her dear memory benumb. (11)

*Nurse:* The Queen sends this message. "Vasavadatta is no more, You are to me and to Mahasena as dear as our own Gopalaka and Palaka, and had been, from the very first, pitched upon by us to be our son-in-law. It is for that purpose that we had you brought to Ujjaini. On the pretext of teaching her the lute, we placed her in your hands, even before marrying you to her before the god of fire. In your impetuosity, you eloped with her without waiting for the formal nuptial celebrations. Then, we had the paintings of yourself and Vasavadatta done on boards, and we celebrated the marriage of you two in effigy. We send you those painting now. May the sight of them give.you some satisfaction!"

*King:* Ah, how kind and pleasing are the words of Her Majesty!

These kind words more precious to me than a hundred thrones are,
All my transgressions cannot her immense love for me mar. (12)

*Padmavati:* My noble lord, I should like to see the portrait painting of my elder sister, and salute her.

*Nurse:* See, princess, see. (shows her the painting of Vasavadatta).

*Padmavati* : (to herself) Humph! She bears a striking resemblance to Lady Avantika (aloud). My noble lord, is this a good likeness of Queen Vasavadatta? (hands it over to the king).

*King*: ( looks at it ). It's not her likeness. It's her very self, I imagine, alas !

How could this delicate complexion
Have come by such cruel destruction?
How did the dreadful fire dare ravage
This sweet face in fashion so savage? (13)

*Padmavati* : If I see the painting of my noble lord, I can say whether the other one is a good likeness of the Queen or not.

*Nnrse* : Here it is,princess. Have a look at it! (gives it)

*Padmavati* . (Takes it and sees it) (to herself) The painting of my noble lord is an exact likeness of his very self. I infer therefore that the other too is an exact likeness of the Queen.

*King :* My quen, ever since you looked at that picture, I see you are pleased but perplexed. Why is that?

*Padmavati* : My noble lord, there is a lady living here who looks exactly like that portrait.

*King :* What! of Vasavadatta?

*Padmavati* : Yes.

*King* : Then bring her here at once. How came she to be here?

*Padmavati* : My noble lord, before my marriage, a certain Brahman left her with me as a ward, saying that she was his sister. Her husband is away, and she shuns the sight of other men. So when you see her in my company, you will know who it is.

*King* : (to himself)

If she a wandering Brahman's sister be,
She cannot be what I take her to be;
In this wide world we now and then see
Some people resembling like pea and pea. (14)

(Enter Female Door-keeper).

*Female Door-Keeper* : Victory to my noble lord! Here's a Brahman from Ujjaini who says that he left his sister in the hands of our queen as a ward. He is waiting at the door to take his sister back.

*King* : Is he that Brahman you mentioned, Padmavati ?

*Padmavati* : It must be.

*King* : Bring in that Brahman at once with the formalities proper to the inner Court.

*Female Door-Keeper*: As Your Majesty commands (Exit).

*King*: Padmavati, will you now conduct that lady here?

*Padmavati*: As my noble lord commands (Exit Padmavati).

(Enter Yaugandharayana and the female door-keeper).

*Yaugandharayana*: (to himself)

For the king's own sake alone I hid the Queen,
All my thoughts and acts were e'r for his welfare,
My scheme has succeeded, but how will I fare
Before my king, it has yet to be seen. (15)

*Female Door-Keeper*: There is my lord. Approach him, sir,

*Yaugandharayana*: (approaching) Victory to Your Majesty!

*King*: I seem to have heard that voice before. O Brahman, did you leave your sister in the hands of Padmavati as a ward?

*Yaugandharayana*: Cerainly, I did.

*King*: (to door-keeper) Then, bring his sister before us at once.

*Female Door-Keeper*: As my lord commands (Exit female door-keeper).

(Enter Padmavati, Avantika and the door-keeper)

*Padmavati*: Come, lady. I have some good news for you.

*Avantika*: What is it?

*Padmavati*: Your brother has come for you.

*Avantika*: Happily, he remembers me still.

*Padmavati*: (approaching the king) Victory to my noble lord! Here is my ward.

*King*: Make a formal restitution, Padmavati. A deposit should be returned in the presence of witnesses. The worthy Raibhya here and this good lady will act as recorders.

*Padmavati*: (to Yaugandharayana) Now, sir, resume your charge of this lady.

*Nnrse*: (looking at Lady Avantika closely) But, this is Princess Vasavadatta!

*King*: What! Mahasena's daughter! Oh, my queen, go into the ladies' court with Padmavati.

*Yaugandharayana*: No, no. She must not go in there. This lady, I tell you, is my sister.

*King*: What are you saying? Assuredly, this is Mahasena's daughter.

*Yaugandharayana*: Oh, king!

Thou art a proud scion of Bharata's race,
Purity, learning and virtue crown thy face,
To stop her by force is unworthy of thee
Who art the model of ev'rythihg kingly. (16)

*King*: Very well, but let us just see this remarkable resemblance of form Remove her veil.

*Yaugandharayana*: Victory to my noble lord!

*Vasavadatta*: Victory to my noble lord!

*King*: My God, this is Yaugandharayana, and this is Mahasena's daughter:

Do I see the vision again,
Or is it now reality?
I saw her thus last time, when sane,
But it was all futility. (17)

(Looks closely at Vasavadatta). There is no doubt now that it is the daughter of Avanti's king.

She whom I deemed dead and wanted to join in death,
Ah, she has been got back by me ev'n in this birth. (17-a)

*Yaugandharayana*: Sir, by concealing the queen, I am guilty of a great offence. I beg of you to forgive me (throws himself at the feet of the king).

*King*: (raising him) You are certainly Yaugandharayana!

By madness feigned, by wars designed,
By deep-laid plans from cunning books,
You pulled me up, as if by books,
When I sank low and got resigned. (18)

*Yaugandharayana*: What have I done? I simply followed the fortunes of my lord.

*Padmavati*: Ah, this then is Queen Vasavadatta! Lady, in treating you as a companion, I have unconsciously transgressed the bounds of propriety. I bow my head and beg your forgiveness. (falls at the feet of Vasavadatta).

*Vasavadatta*: (raising Padmavati) Rise up, rise up, O gracious woman! If anything offends, it is your prostrating to me unnecessarily for nothing at all.

*Padmavati*: I am great'y beholden to you.

*King*: what was your intention, Yaugandharayana, in concealing the queen?

*Yaugandharayana*: My one idea was to save Kausambi.

*King*: Why did you leave her as a ward in the hands of Padmavati?

*Yaugandharayana*: The soothsayers, Pushpaka and Bhadraka, had predicted that Padmavati would become the consort of your Majesty.

*King*: Did Rumanvan also know about this trick ?

*Yaugandharayana*: My lord, they all knew.

*King*: What a rogue Rumanvan is!

*Yaugandhayana*: My lord, let the worthy Raibhya and this good lady return this very day to Ujjaini to announce there that Queen Vasavadatta is safe.

*King*: Oh' no. We will all go together, along with Queen Padmavati.

*Epilogue.*

Let our lion-like monarch rule this land from sea to sea,
With the Himalayas and Vindhyas as ear-pendants,
May his imperial umbrella for e'r be
Spread in solitary splendour o'r his dependants! (19)

*Exeunt Omnes*).

(End of Act VI).

(End of Svapna Vasavadatta).

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